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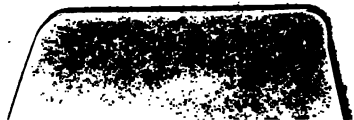
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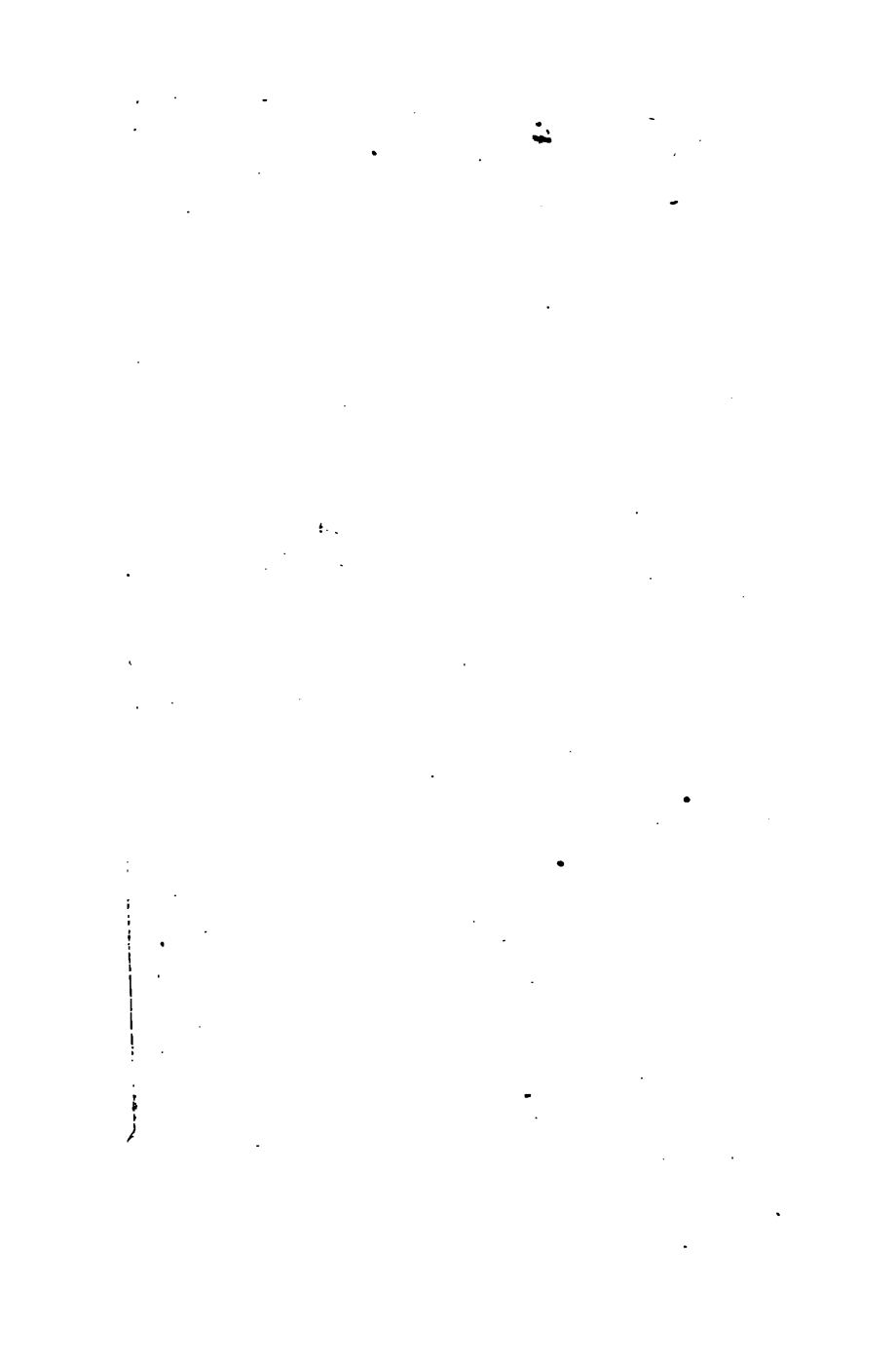
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THE SINNER'S TEARS.

CONTAINING
TREATISES UPON A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT DIVINE SUBJECTS;

IN
Meditations and Prayers.

BY T. FETTIPLACE.



Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all things thou can'st desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Printed Office:
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1801.

141. 22. 471.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for transparency and accountability, particularly in financial matters. The text notes that without reliable records, it is difficult to track progress, identify issues, and make informed decisions.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It mentions the use of surveys, interviews, and focus groups to gather qualitative information, as well as statistical analysis and data visualization techniques to process quantitative data. The importance of ensuring the reliability and validity of the data sources is also highlighted.

3. The third part of the document describes the process of interpreting the results and drawing conclusions. It stresses the need for a systematic approach to analyzing the data, taking into account the context and the limitations of the study. The text also discusses the importance of communicating the findings clearly and effectively to the relevant stakeholders.

4. The fourth part of the document provides a summary of the key findings and conclusions. It reiterates the importance of maintaining accurate records and the need for a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. The text also offers some recommendations for future research and practice, based on the findings of the study.

Address

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

THE miseries of this distressed age are such, and so many, that I know well, a subject of joy would, in the world's eye, appear more seasonable, and be far more acceptable, after such a deluge of sorrow : but that heart which is as truly sensible of the weight of Sin, as of the burthen of Misery, will surely find that there is no true joy but in godly sorrow, that there is more complacency of soul in one repentant tear, than in an age of pleasure : with grief of heart I confess, that much of my little time hath been vainly spent, I now (therefore) willingly resolve, to lament my lost hours, and shall account it my chiefest happiness on earth, to spend my short remainder to my best advantage ; I beseech thee therefore (for thine own sake) to consider with me, that God hath reserved us unto the last, the worst, the very dregs of time ; that our transgressions are innumerable, our calamities unmatchable, our griefs unutterable, our hours, our minutes, perhaps are few, and full of evil, that it were even now, most just with God to bring them to an end ; that Satan's cunning is unsearchable, his malice implacable, and (without divine assistance) irresistible ; that there is no one minute of our whole lives, in which we are not exposed unto many great dangers, both of souls

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and shall then find, that it becometh
us to watch and pray, that it mainly concerneth us to
use such remedies, as may either
enable us in the combat, or support us in the foil.

Such humble confessions, and devout prayers, as
(thou God's mercy) I have found agreeable to mine own
condition, I have here published for the good of thine;
and such true comfort as I have enjoyed in them, I
earnestly desire may be derived to thee from them: and
my humble and most earnest petition unto Almighty
God is, that as we have been deep sharers in sinning
and in suffering, so we may also be devout sharers in
sorrowing, that the tears of our ~~tears~~ may pacify the ^{Blood}
of his wrath, that so his fierce anger, may be ^{of}
appeased, our crying sins pardoned, our bad consci-
ences quieted, our bleeding hearts comforted, our lan-
guishing desires relieved, our sad divisions ended, our
distressed church restored, our dear country preser-
ved, and our sinful souls and bodies eternally saved.

With this happy resolution of timely contrition, I
joyfully embrace thee, and earnestly intreat to be em-
braced by thee, that by this blessed union of our souls
upon earth, we may at last enjoy each other, in those
sweet embraces of eternity, which is the cordial desire,
and shall be the daily and devout prayer of thy servant
in all good affections and hearty well-wishes in Christ
Jesus.

THOMAS FETTIPLACE.

Epil. 11. 13, 14. & see Page 240,
O.

THE SINNER'S COMPLAINT.

AH Lord, so long! what sudden fears?
What cares and doubts, what sighs and tears,
Since last thou did'st afford thy loving look,
Have me oppress'd,
And robb'd of rest,
Because thou, Lord, thy servant hast forsook?

If not a look, yet hear me speak;
And pity me; O do not break
Thy bruised reed; why should'st thou strive with man,
Whose days are done,
When but begun,
Since thou, great God, hast measur'd out his span?

Amaze me not with fearful things;
Give me thy grace, O give me wings
Of swift desire, and holy zeal, to raise,
My soul to skies,
With powerful cries,
That I may sweetly warble forth thy praise.

Thou art my centre, fix me there,
Or move me in thy blessed sphere;
Suffer me not (dear Lord) to move from thee;
There is no rest,
But in thy breast,
And in thine absence present misery.

O that I was at rest with thee ;
 Or else that thou wast come to me,
 Since in thine absence I am so distressed ;
 Thy wrathful frown
 Hath thrown me down,
 And rais'd a storm in my unquiet breast.

Come, Lord, and close these wretched eyes,
 So blear'd with sins and miseries ;
 Resolve this erring heart to tamer dust,
 Which every day
 Thus steals away,
 That it may rise more joyful and more just.

THE SINNER'S JOY.

AH, my soul! why so dismay'd?
 Why so sad, so sore afraid?
 Canst thou think those gracious eyes,
 Drench'd in tears for thee, *Heb. Y. 7*
 Can disdain such powerful cries,
 Such humility?
 Sinners souls must sorrow keep,
 Men may mourn, when God can weep.

Soul, though thou hast done amiss,
 Yet rejoice,—for thou art his.
 See, his soul was sad to death.
 In his agony,
 Sad to ease thy woeful breath,
 In thy misery.
 Be not faithless, but believe,
 Man may sigh, when God can grieve.

Do not grudge to lend a tear,
 Canst thou doubt, or canst thou fear?
 Canst thou see his bleeding heart,
 And not believe him?
 Wounded soul that bears a part,
 Can never grieve him.
 Timely tears are precious feed,
 Man may weep, when God can bleed.

Be not so cast down alas!
 See his soul forsaken was
 Frighted with his Father's frown.

Left in pains of hell:

Ah! why art thou so cast down?

'Twas to make thee well;

Doubt not, but admire his cost,
 Man may stray, when God was lost.

Soul, when art thou left alone,
 Do not deem thy Saviour gone,
 When thou canst not see his face;

'Tis to let thee know

That those sinners withdraw his grace,
 Which brought him so low.

See where he in grave doth lie,
 Man may faint, when God can die.

Weep no more, but wipe thine eyes,
 See, O see thy Saviour rise,
 Happy soul, thy debts are paid,

He is ascended;

Death is not, be not afraid,

All woes are ended;

Grieve no more, believe and live,
 Man may take, when God can give.



THE SINNER'S TEARS.

ENTRANCE TO THE WORK.

THERE is no man but naturally desireth happiness; even those unhappy ones that least endeavour for it, have oftentimes an earnest longing to it; there can be no true happiness without peace, no true peace without holiness, without offering violence to our corrupt affections, without ransacking our souls, and searching out the very secrets of our sinful hearts: the worldling may be outwardly merry, but none but the sons of sorrow can be inwardly contented; that outward joy may delight for a season, but this inward peace remaineth for ever.

Peace is the richest jewel in a christian's cabinet, the choicest legacy that Christ bequeathed to his chosen ones; in it there is a complication of all blessings, and without it an expectation of all miseries; there is no attaining to it, but by the search of him who is the giver of it; there is no following this search, but by that path which leadeth to the ready

way, and there is but one guide that can direct us unto that path. Blessed God, there is no way unto thee but by thee, thou art life, and thou art the way to that life, and thou art the guide to that way, thou Lord, art all in all unto me, and therefore shalt be now and ever praised by me.

In all awful reverence to thy Sacred Majesty, in fear and trembling at the sight of thy severe justice to impenitent sinners, in serious apprehension, of thy sweet mercy in forbearing me a miserable wretch, and with unfeigned sorrow and humility of heart for grieving thy good spirit, I here dedicate the short remainder of my sinful days to thy service; in thy name and in thy fear, I begin my discourse, who art the God of peace, by whose holy Spirit, I am guided to this happy search: Lord, lead me in it by the same Spirit, that I may become an instrument of glory unto thee, of happiness to thine, of rest to mine own soul.

CHAP. I.

UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR SINFUL
THOUGHTS TOUCHING THE SACRED DEITY,
WITH HOLY CAUTIONS TO ORDER OUR DE-
VOTIONS ARIGHT.

LORD,

WHEN I seriously consider what thou art,
(the least glimpse of whole eternal glory I can no
way see but by conceiving what thou art not)
when I look upon the vast distance between thee
the blessed Creator, and me thy sinful creature, I can-
not but wonder at thy great patience, at thy rich
goodness, at thine endless mercy towards me.

Chap. II. 10

My whole life from my nativity hath been a conti-
nued course of sinfulness against thee, mine actions
highly rebellious, my thoughts sinfully wicked, even
the very best of them a dark, confused, indigested
heap of misconceivings of thy Sacred Majesty.

Thou (Lord) art an essence most glorious, most
inconceivable, eternally enjoying blessedness in the
fruition of thyself; thy centre is every where, thy cir-
cumference no where; thou admittest not of augmen-
tation, nor of diminution; no length of time is beyond
thee, no depth of wisdom beneath thee, no height of
glory above thee, no breadth of mercy beside thee:
thou art, O Lord, a most pure, simple, and eternal

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Neither is it enough for me to consider the divine nature in unity of essence, unless I go yet further and find a trinity of persons; to be curious in this search is dangerous, to be careless, damnable; nothing may be here safely seen, but what is graciously revealed: Lord, no man can see thee as thou art in thyself, suffer me therefore to see thee as thou art unto us, that I may know thee, and love thee, and delight in thee, and be for ever known and loved of thee. *1 Cor. 1. 30, 31*

If there were not an eternity of being, then it may be truly said, that not being was before being, and so that being had its rise from not being, by causing itself to be when it was not: so should privation which was eternally evil, produce that glorious being which is eternally good; seeing this cannot be, it will hence follow, that being was from all eternity, and that this being was eternally good; for that which was good in the effect, must needs be far more eminently good in the cause. That this eternal good being must be also infinite, because eternity itself is infinite; that this infinite eternal good being must be of infinite power, to continue infinitely; that this infinite power must also be of infinite understanding, to support and preserve this eternal infinite good being; and this infinite understanding is God.

Where there is an infinite understanding, there must also be an infinite object to be understood, else could it not be infinitely active, and so should both eternity and infinity suffer diminution and become defective, which were for them both to be, and not to be, which is impossible ; and seeing there can be no object infinite out of God ; therefore this eternal infinite and ever blessed object, must of necessity be God.

Where there is an infinite understanding, and an infinite object to be understood, there cannot chuse but be an infinite and eternal love ; for from this infinite understanding of this infinitely amiable and for ever blessed object, there must needs proceed an infinite delight, whereby it infinitely enjoyeth its own excellency, and eternally reflecteth on the beauty of its own perfection ; else this infinite eternal understanding should want power to enjoy this infinitely amiable object, and so should be neither good, infinite, nor eternal ; and this infinite and eternal love is God.

Now because this understanding, object and love are all infinite, and that whatsoever is infinite must of necessity be God ; it will from thence truly and undoubtedly follow, that this understanding is God, this object God, and this love God. And because it is as equally impossible that there can be any more than one infinite, therefore it will as assuredly fol-

low, that these three are one, three in existence, one in essence, three in order, one in eternity ; three persons one eternal, infinite, glorious, incomprehensible, wise God ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

This is that blessed Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that ineffable, most mysterious trinity in unity, eternally enjoying blessedness in its own essence : this is that blessed inter-union of that ever blessed Spirit, that most unspeakable, immutable, incomprehensible fruition of eternal joy, at which the blessed Angels stand amazed, in which the blessed Saints shall sweetly rest themselves for ever.

All this, and infinitely more than this, thou art Lord in thyself, thy wisdom, justice, mercy, truth, power, holiness, and whatsoever other attributes thou art pleased to take unto thy divine essence, are unto thee one, although unto us divers ; and thou art therefore pleased diversly to manifest thyself unto us, because we cannot otherwise conceive thy being, than according to thine outward working ; thy distinct operations are unto us the divers indications of thine eternal, undivided, and for ever blessed essence.

And now, Lord, who can see thee thus and live ? I have hitherto seen nothing but destruction to my body, amazement to my soul. In thine essence there is light inaccessible, unto which no mortal eye can approach ; in thine attributes terror unutterable,

from which no mortal man can escape: thy wisdom trying my corrupt heart, and searching my sinful reins; thy justice most severe, fearful in the pronouncement, dreadful in the execution; thy truth admitteth of no alteration; no judgment pronounced but precisely fulfilled; heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one title of thy sacred word; thy holiness is such that even the blessed Angels are impure in thy sight; what then shall become of me a miserable wretch, the thoughts of whose heart are only evil, and that continually? were it not for thy rich mercy, I were lost for ever; by this alone I am for ever reconciled unto thee, and shall eternally be blessed with thee.

X I can here with joy unspeakable and glorious, behold thee my loving Father affectionately embracing me in Christ from all eternity, by the sweet working of thy holy Spirit; this is that truly blessed vision of the sacred and mysterious trinity in this life of grace, that will for ever make me truly happy in that of glory. Lord, if I find thee not three in one to my soul's comfort in this life, I shall never be found of thee to be blessed in thee in that to come.

Without thy power it had not been decreed, without thy wisdom it had never been acted, without thy love it had never been finished. Here in a severe Judge I joyfully behold a merciful Redeemer; in a glorious Divinity a true humanity, united to the

Deity, not mixed with it; before I had three persons in one essence, here I have two natures in one person, God and man, one Christ, in whom, and by whom, I have a joyful interest and undoubted union in the Godhead. Here is the Father promising, the Son performing, the Holy Spirit confirming. This is alone that blessed sight of God, that bringeth rest and quietness to my weary soul: to know him to be my God, to have suffered for my sin, and risen again for my justification. To find him supporting, sustaining me in my infirmities, relieving my wants, chastising my errors, revenging my wrongs, repairing my breaches, directing my ways, protecting my person; wounding, rending, breaking my obdurate heart; creating in me a clean heart, and renewing a right spirit within me; bemoaning, bewailing mine iniquities; inviting, nay compelling me to mercy and forgiveness.

Seeing now, O my soul, that God's being in himself is incomprehensible, and his love in Christ unutterable, with what filial fear should'st thou think of him, with what awfulness name him, with what reverence and preparedness pray unto him, with what heat of affection love him, with what carefulness and conscience fear to offend him, with what cheerfulness and holy diligence devote thy service to him.

Blessed Lord,

SEEING that I am utterly unable of myself to comprehend thee, O let me be graciously comprehended of thee, that corruption may be swallowed up of immortality, and humane frailty of eternal glory.

As thou hast given me an understanding in part to know thee, so give me also affections intirely to love thee, and fixed resolutions to adhere unto thee; that as thou art truly and eternally one in thine essence, and yet distinctly three in thy persons, so I may be truly and entirely one in my obedience, although distinctly three in my faculties; that all may be but one, and that a pleasing sacrifice of praises unto thee, of profit unto others, of comfort to myself.

Forgive my misconceivings of thy sacred essence, my rash approaches to thy heavenly presence, my cold, careless, irreligious thoughts, distracted words, undecent actions. Lord I am sailing on the stormy sea of ignorance and misery, O be thou my sure pilot to direct me, my sweet calm to refresh me, my safe harbour to receive me; for of thee, and through thee, and to thee, are all things: to thee be glory for ever.—AMEN.

CHAP. II

UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD'S LOVE,
AND MAN'S UNTHANKFULNESS.

A MEDITATION FOR THE MORNING.

BLESSED GOD,

WHEN I consider of the richness, of the largeness, of the constancy of thy love to man, of man's vileness and untowardness unto thee his God, I stand amazed at thy goodness, and mine own unthankfulness. How great and invaluable a blessing do I enjoy in being made partaker of the glorious light of this present day? how vile and unworthy am I that receive it? how great and glorious art thou that givest it? Thou, O Lord, art light inaccessible; unto which no mortal eye can approach; before whose glorious majesty the blessed angels stand amazed; and I am dust and ashes, yea worse; Lord, (for dust was thy creation, and therefore in its entity was good) before I was dust I was not at all: this not being, by thee became a being, this being beautiful, this beauty immortal; and without thee this happy being is again become far worse than not to be.

What can be more vain, more empty than nothing; ah ~~who~~^{who} is me, I am now become far worse than nothing; thou ~~made~~^{made} me all goodness, and that goodness might have made me all blessedness; but I have myself all sin, and this sin hath made me all misery; there was darkness in not being, but that darkness was incapable; there is greater darkness in being ill; for this darkness is most capable of the privation of all light of comfort in this life, of the fruition of the blackness of darkness in hell for ever.

This, Lord, was my condition in nature, and without thy gracious help must have been so for ever. Let me now see what my condition is by grace, by which I enjoy not only the light of nature (without which my life would prove uncomfortable) but also a sweet and safe assurance, that thou wilt by this happy light conduct me safely to the blessed light of glory.

Blessed Lord, I can now look no way but to happiness, I now find a true sweetness and composedness of soul, a constant and courageous settledness of heart, even in the very height of all the disturbances of nature, of all the inundation of sin, of all the fluctuations of sorrow, of all the machinations of Satan: from the sweet fountain of thy mercy, arise those precious streams of consolation, which abundantly relieve me in this barren wilderness.

I find indeed a law in my members continually rebelling against the law of my mind, but I find also thy grace to be sufficient for me, by which I am victorious here, and shall be triumphant hereafter: Satan may strive to winnow me like wheat, but this shall make me the purer for thy granary. ^{me} I now find a total and a blessed change of the whole man; mine affections which formerly were captivated unto sin, intirely devoted to thy service; my love with holy *David* wonderful to thy law, my hatred perfect against sin, my desire eager for thy presence, my fear astonishing in thine absence, my delight in thy promises ravishing, my joy in thy performances triumphing.

By these rich endowments of thine, I am wrapt up above the reach of human misery; all vain and empty desires of the besotting pleasures of this life, appear truly as they are, but thorns and briars, to disturb the growth of my felicity; how sweet is their loss for thy gain! how easily, how willingly, how joyfully, how thankfully are all these foggy mists of ignorance and error happily dispersed, by the bright rays of my ensuing glory.

Beside these fawning enemies of peace, which flatter to unquietness, I am now able to encounter with those other which affright the soul even in their first appearances, and are able to deject the carnal man even to astonishment, and utterly to expose

him to the tyranny of sin, and torture of punishment: such Lord, is the vast difference between the blessed ones of thy fold, and those unhappy ones which stray from thee into the strange pastures of impiety.

No sorrow can surprize me but for sin, and even this too thou makest to increase my joy: what afflictions can be evil, which is thy physick who art the fountain of all good? if it be grievous in the taste, it is joyous in the effects; if I mark the happy close, I must with joy confess, that these bitter storms will end in blessed calms, will bring to my remembrance those grievous sins that brought my Saviour to those bitter groans, will force me from the sorrows of this life, to my celestial harbour, will bring me on my knees to see mine own vileness, will enrich me with the graces of humility and patience, and together with them the sweet enjoyments of thy blessed spirit; and if so, how can I complain of want, when instead of earth I enjoy heaven?

Lord, what can he fear that is assured of thy favour? afflictions, tribulations, crosses, sins, satan, death, hell itself shall work to mine advantage: as my cross is more grievous, my crown shall be more glorious; where sin and satan have been most prevailing, there grace and goodness shall be more triumphant. How truly sweet Lord is the inviolable promise? who powerfully compellest

even the very rage of earth and hell to work to their advantage. Lord sanctify the trials of this life unto my sinful soul, that ~~by my~~ⁱⁿ patient sufferings with my Saviour here, I may have peace with him, and by him hereafter.

I have hitherto looked on mine inward happiness; if I now can cast mine eyes upon mine outward, I shall there see that all these outward blessings also are most peculiarly belonging to the Saints; the wicked ones of the world are robbers, and shall one day give an account of their thefts; children, friends, strangers, even our very enemies, are protected, preserved, enriched, blessed for our sakes; so was Joseph and his brethren for Jacob, Zoar for Lot, Potiphee for Joseph, the Centurian and soldiers for St. Paul: and if thou (Lord) wilt look so lovingly upon the children of this world for thine elect sake, how graciously wilt thou one day look upon those sons that shall be made partakers of thine own inheritance?

Who would not now be holy? seeing that in this blessed condition, there is not only safety inviolable, but peace unutterable, safety in life, and sweetness in death.

And now Lord, when I enquire for what cause thou givest me all this, I find nothing but thy meer love unto me; when I ask what thou requirest for all this, I hear thee demand nothing but the return

of love : what is more easy, what more sweet, than love ? and what object more amiable, than that glorious Being that is the perfection of all love, and that love the beauty of all perfection ? thou canst not give, Lord, what thou hast not, the glory of thy creation is but a glimpse of that greater glory of thine essence ; Lord, who can deny thee love ? how sweet is this yoke, how light this burthen ! when I love thee, I enjoy thee, and myself in thee, I possess thee, I rest in thee for ever. O my God, all that thou givest me, all that thou requirest of me, is to make me happy, to thee be glory for ever. AMEN.

Blessed Lord,

ALL this I joyfully confess thou hast done for me, and yet the whole course of my corrupt life hath been nothing else but a continued rebellion against thee ; mine eyes full of adultery, my tongue of corrupt communication, mine hands of oppression, mine ears open to iniquity, mine heart full of hypocrisy, my feet lame in thy paths, and swift to walk in the ways of sinners, my whole man nothing else but the very body of death, and destruction.

I have sinned against precepts, against promises, against mercies, against judgements, against the checks of mine own conscience, and the blessed motions of thine holy spirit ; I have even tempted my temptations, by making daily and hourly provisions for

fin; and have been so far from sorrowing for all this, *Mat. 11.*
 so that I have resolved to continue yet still. And yet
 so great is thy compassion towards me, that still thou
 storest up new mercies for me.

Lord, I bewail my weakness; I lament my wilfulness, I abhor my filthiness; I heartily desire, and earnestly endeavour to unrip my soul, to ransack my heart, to unlock the very secrets of my thoughts, that I may have all my sins continually before me, even in their worst appearances; and I may loath them and leave them, and obtain thy gracious pardon for them.

I confess, Lord, that I am utterly unworthy to enjoy this blessed light, which I have so much abused to thy great dishonor; much more the light of grace, by which thou ledest me to that of glory; and that it were ~~more~~ just with thee, for ever to deprive me of these happy lights, and to expose me to the terrors of eternal darkness.

Lord, I have sinned, and cannot chuse but sin; I am a great and grievous sinner, and yet I am thy child; have pity upon me, have pity upon me, for I am in misery: into the bosom of thy tender love, I thrust my sinful soul for safety and protection.

O let not thy justice triumph in my ruin, but thy mercy in my deliverance ; so shalt thou have the glory, and I the sweetness of mine eternal happiness.

Hear me, O Lord, and help me, for thy name sake, for thy promise sake, for thy Son's sake.—
AMEN.



CHAP. III.

UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

A MEDITATION FOR THE MORNING.

BLESSED GOD,

WITHOUT thy holy providence, no creature can subsist, by thine Almighty power they were created out of nothing, and if thou shouldst not sustain them, they must needs return to nothing; how wisely, how wonderfully dost thou guide and govern these inferior creatures? All things are at once disposed of by thee, and move successively to their appointed ends? but above all, how graciously hast thou provided for the good of man? what varieties of food, how secretly, how sweetly disposed it to sustentation? No creature can be nourishing without thee, and with thee I enjoy not only nutriment, but delectation; how sweet is this thy goodness to my body! how much more sweet thy mercy to my soul! and if thy temporal refreshments are so good, how ravishing is that celestial food, with which thy saints and angels are delighted!

Lord, how undeserving am I of these thy many favours? Thou givest rain to the earth, and it becometh fruitful; thou loadest me daily with thy blessings, and lo I am unthankful; even those creatures that are insensible, are daily nourished into augmentation, and man alone, whom thou hast made to live for ever, contents himself with daily diminution.

This woefully appears by my deadness and dulness in my christian calling, by my backwardness to holy duties, by my carelessness and coldness in prayer, weariness in reading, irksomeness in meditation, by my faint hope, sick faith, lukewarm love, frozen charity, lame patience, languishing zeal, and all those other visible decays of goodness, which are none other than the very symptoms of a dying soul.

Ah now, Lord! how miserably deformed must I needs appear in thy sight, that am thus ugly in mine own? Thou that hadst compassion on me, when I was in my blood, and then saidst unto me, live; that hast washed me clean from sin and pollution, and espoused me into thine own bosom; wilt thou also love me in death? wilt thou court me in the grave? how justly mightest thou for ever leave me to mine own ruin, that can so easily, so willingly forsake thee, for the pleasures of sin; and yet, how sweetly, how affectionately dost thou order all things

for me? Even my very sins invite me to a more happy, to a nearer union with thee.

To thee, therefore, O my God, the life of my life, the very being, and assured comfort of my sinful soul, and wretched body, do I address myself for mercy and forgiveness. -

I confess myself unworthy of thy gracious providence in sustaining this frail and infirm body, much more unworthy (O Lord) of thine unspeakable love, in reviving, relieving, embracing my deformed soul.

Blessed Lord, who am I, of whom thou art thus tenderly compassionate? when I was in the womb I was defiled with sin, when I came out of it, I was covered with shame; the world bewitched me, the flesh befottered me, the devil beguiled me.

Lord, when no eye pitied me, then thou hadst mercy on me; and now at last when I am run from thee, when I have adulterated my first love, when I am become poor and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, thou freely forgivest me, thou callest me thy fair one, and givest me thy love.

O my God, I admire thy goodness, I deplore and abhor mine own wretchedness: O let the sweetness of thy love in Christ, inflame the dying sparks of my benumbed soul to praise thee without ceasing.

Expatriate my narrow thoughts, with daily contemplation of my heavenly home, with joyful expectation of the sweet fruition of eternity; O give me such a blessed raptasy of soul, that I may live above the reach of human misery, and reign with thee hereafter in immortal glory.



CHAP. IV.

UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF THE SINFUL-
NESS, SHORTNESS, AND UNCERTAINTY OF
LIFE.

A MEDITATION FOR EVENING.

LORD,

WHEN I call to mind how many days have past me without bending of a knee, how many nights I have gone prayerless to bed, I may well wonder that I am this hour alive to speak unto thee : I have been too unmindful of thy holy providence, and am therefore utterly unworthy of thy merciful protection : few and full of evil have my days been in the house of my pilgrimage, I know not how soon I may go hence, and yet I still live as if I knew not why I came hither.

I am many ways invited to my heavenly home ; how sweetly dost thou wean from the miseries of life, by the blessedness of death. By this evening's rest of my body, I am put in mind of that eternal rest of my soul ; this day's ending, tells me, that the end of all things is at hand, that the fashion of this world passeth, and that all things shall become new :

-as this hour is the evening to this day, so this day (for ought I know) may be the evening to my whole life; I cannot challenge to myself one minute more, how vain am I to promise days and years! Lord, in the whole current of thy sacred story, I find but only one, that durst presume upon so large a reckoning, and him thou brandest with the name of fool: let his folly Lord, be my instruction; so shall I account each day my last, and neither care to live, nor fear to die.

How many have been snatched out of this life, how suddenly, and to man's eye how fearfully? how unspeakable is thy mercy unto me, to spare me ~~from~~^{or} repentance? how often and how earnestly hast thou invited me to mercy? how coldly, and how carelessly have I refused these thy gracious offers? still I sin, and still thou forgiveest, and (which is the height of my impiety) I therefore am more and more evil against thee, because thou art more and more gracious unto me; and it were now most just with thee, even this very moment, to put a period to my sinful life.

*To it?
So?*

Lord, let this teach me to improve the short remnant of my days to thy service, and that I may endeavour so to do, I will prescribe myself these following rules:

• Each evening shall take a true account of that day's traffic for my soul; and where I find myself a loser,

I will labour for supply. When I awake, my first thoughts shall begin with thee, from whom I have my first being: nothing will more truly represent me to myself, than the first view of mine affections; if my first thoughts be seasoned with grace, my following actions will favour of goodness. My care shall be more to dress my soul, than to trim my body; I will think no pains too great, no ornaments too rich to make her beautiful. One devout sigh from a contrite heart, is of more worth (in thy sight) than an hour's talk of lip-devotion. My affections are the soul of my words, without which, I speak only, but pray not; when my prayers are cold, my hopes may well be comfortless. My set hours for devotion shall be constant; no pretence of nature shall debar me of this happiness: the lover's eyes are often glancing on the pleasing object that delights him; if my affections be sincere, my looks will be amorous; I shall often steal a sweet ejaculation to satisfy the longing of my love-sick soul. When I can thus bring the day to an end, my life will be comfortable, my death happy, and I may then say with holy David, that I may lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is thou Lord only that makest me dwell in safety.

Blessed Lord, in the morning of my creation thou gavest me unto myself; in the evening of my redemption thou gavest thyself unto me: my creation was wonderful, my redemption astonishing. As this

*But God forbid that I sh^d glory
in my self, or in any thing I have
done in the flesh.*

*Gal.
1. 14.*

day's light is obscured for the rest of my body, so wert thou the blessed and eternal light for the rest of my soul. Thou, O blessed Saviour, art my light to direct me, my heat to comfort me, my sweet and safe repose eternally to refresh me.

Gracious God, & Saviour

WITH humble and dejected heart I ask forgiveness of the many failings of my sinful life past, recal my sinful thoughts to my remembrance: Lord, as the burthen of them is intolerable, so let my grief for them be unutterable.

Lord, open mine eyes, that I may see the foulness, and the filthiness of sin, and apprehend the greatness of thy wrath against it.

Forgive those actual sins which this day's light hath witnessed; Lord, give me a godly sorrow for them, a perfect hatred against them, a fixed and a constant resolution to forsake them.

Lord, cleanse me from my secret and unknown sins, and keep me, for thy mercy sake, that daring and presumptuous sins may never have dominion over me.

Make me a careful Steward of that precious time which thou hast given me; withdraw my affections from the vain pleasures of this sinful life, and grant that all the days of my appointed time, I may wait readily and cheerfully until my change shall come.

CHAP. V.

UPON OUR APPROACHING UNTO GOD'S HOUSE.

LORD,

THERE is no mortal man worthy to stand at thy door, much less to appear in thy presence; and yet, how often have I presumed to approach unto thee, without that preparedness of heart, without that dejection of soul, without that true and holy reverence that becometh thy child.

I am now going out of Egypt, into Canaan, out of bondage into freedom: the sinful troubles of this life, are my soul's task-masters, to load it with a burthen insupportable, and this is that place of sacrifice, that mount of God, to ease and solace it.

Consider therefore, O my soul, in what relation thou now standest to thy God. If thou art a true Israelite, thou wilt look back upon thy drudgery, and despise it, and offer up thyself a living sacrifice with cheerfulness, with thankfulness of heart. If thou art God's child, thou wilt love to be in God's house; long for God's presence, thirst for his favor, delight in his word, and rejoice to be often at his table. Thou wilt make it thy chiefest joy to be often in that place, from whence thou mayst expect thy chiefest good.

Lord, (by thy grace assisting) I will now un-cloath myself of all earthly affections, I will call to mind unto whose presence I approach, and wherefore; that I am going from this church militant, to that triumphant; that thou, Lord, art as truly present here in grace, as there in glory (unless therefore I am in love with misery) I will leave behind me all earthly mindedness, and carry with me a pure heart, and heavenly thoughts, a lowly mind, and reverend gesture. Lord, if I go not cheerfully to thy throne of grace, I may well fear I shall never go joyfully to that of glory.

The lowest room in thy house shall content me, divine worship admitteth not of desparity of persons; we are all sinners, and (as we are in nature) most impure in thy sight, the worst room in thy house is too good even for the best of us, yet decency of place may be taken with modesty, if not sought with emulation.

During the time of this holy dispensation, I will call my thoughts unto a strict attendance, and make it part of my precedent prayer, that I may. Satan is ever most busy, when our intentions are most holy; which when he cannot deliver, he labours to corrupt, and by this means when I desire to grow better, I become worse. How careful ought I to be to avoid his cunning, who can conzen me in my best actions?

My soul shall more delight itself with the matter, than my ears with the melody of thy sacred notes: church-music will be then truly sweet unto me, when mine outward joy is subservient to mine inward.

Man's sinful weakness shall not make me slight thy holy ordinances: if my pastor have failings, I will pity, and pray for him, but not despise him. If I look into my own soul, I shall there find work enough to repair mine own ruins. This, Lord, shall rather move me to extol thy mercy, in upholding mine own steps, to lament the sadness of my brother's misery, Lord, let me never think myself better than another, because I know not how soon I may become worse.

I shall willingly continue in that fold where thou hast placed me, and hope to remain there with comfort, till thou shalt lead me out with safety. While I am at thy feeding, I am happy; one of thy morsels well digested with humility and thankfulness, will yield me better nourishment than that other food of mine own finding. The very meanest of thy ministers may afford me patience, and that heavenly grace, with thy blessing to boot, is a great advantage. If I receive thy sacred word with cheerfulness, with earnestness of heart, my obedience shall be accepted, my zeal rewarded.

While I am within thy walls, I shall account that gesture most decent, that is most humble, and those ceremonies most necessary, that are most suitable to obedience; all matters of doctrine (which are necessary to salvation) ought to be guided by the sacred word, which is the only rule of faith; all matters of discipline (which are necessary only to obedience) are therefore left to the churches care; that as thou art one, so thy church may be one in that blessed union of love, which is the bond of peace.

AND now, O Lord, if thou shalt call me to a strict account for all the misdemeanors in thy sacred worship, with what confusion of face must I needs appear before thee?

How many evil suggestions? how many idle imaginations? how many sinful objects have I often entertained, to divert my thoughts from thy service?

I have too often sinned in absenting thy house, but more often and more grievously in frequenting it, by coming carelessly and out of custom, by unbecoming gestures, cold prayers, heartless hearing, prophane scoffing, curious censuring, and even in the best of my performances, by serving thee my God by halves; all this I heartily bewail, and earnestly desire thy pardon and forgiveness for it.

Lord, let this day's rest of my body, bring to my remembrance, that eternal rest of my soul; let me not now think mine own thoughts, speak mine own words, do mine own actions, but come before thee with a sanctified and humble soul, with a wounded and contrite spirit.

Repel all evil suggestions, remove all idle imaginations, divert all sinful objects, enlighten mine understanding, rectify my will, strengthen my memory, subdue mine affections, that I may rejoice in thy love, delight in thy law, long for thy presence, rely on thy promise, thirst for thy grace, and be for ever blessed in thy glory.—AMEN.



CHAP. VI.

UPON OUR RETURNING FROM GOD'S HOUSE, AND
THE NEGLECT OF PRIVATE DUTIES.

LORD,

HE that knoweth thee, will undoubtedly delight to serve thee; if I call thy sabbath a delight, my thoughts in this day will be pure, my words gracious, mine actions holy. That soul which cannot joyfully familiarize itself with thee in this life, may well be fearful to be seen of thee in that to come.

When I seriously consider what a rich favor I enjoy, how great a distance I am at from thee my God, how sweet a mercy thou affordest me to speak unto thee, I cannot but confess mine own unworthiness, if I regard not what I hear, if I rejoice not to recal thy blessed words to my remembrance.

How dreadful was that voice that spake in thunder! and how severe the words that then were spoken! how blessed is this still music of the gospel! and how delightful to my wounded spirit! Lord let this raise my soul above the reach of earthly vanities, let this encourage me to heavenly cheerfulness, in heavenly duties, to be joyful in reading, fervent in prayer, frequent in meditation, constant

in all. That knowledge will make woefully wise, which teacheth me to know, and not to do thy will. Meditation is the life of hearing. Practice the life of meditation, and a sincere heart the life of practice.

When I look into my life past, I find it to be all sin; when I consider of my life present, I cannot but confess it to be all shame; I am still so far from growing better, that I am become much worse; this is that blessed day which concerneth my peace, if I embrace not this happy opportunity, I may justly fear these gracious offers will be hid for ever from mine eyes, each word, that I heard this day, is of weight; if I become not more holy by my heavenly improvements by it, I shall certainly become sinful by my careless neglecting of it. Thy work, O Lord, will have its end; and this end (either to my happiness or ruin) shall assuredly promote thy glory; there is no vacuity in nature, with thee, the God of nature, there can be none.

Think therefore, O my soul, that this day's instruction may be thy last (as thou hopest) for heaven, let it not pass thee without some profit: consider seriously, how many millions of worlds one lost soul would give to be restored to thy condition, that to-morrow thou mayest be as one of them, and then judge how great will be thy folly, how woeful

thy misery, if thou triflest with those sacred counsels which concern thy rest.

O THOU God of infinite compassions, look not upon those infinite failings of my sinful nature, but behold me in the beauty and perfection of thy blessed Son.

Teach me, O Lord, to see the rebellion of mine own wicked heart by his perfect obedience, my sinfulness by his righteousness, my misery by his mercy.

Forgive my many and sinful compliances of nature, which have made me a stranger to thy graces, and mine own happiness.

The great neglect of mine obedience unto thy commands, hath justly called for the great and heavy load of mine afflictions; the careless withdrawing of mine affections from thee, my God, hath occasioned the sad departings of thy holy spirit from me.

precious Jesus
O that my ~~lots of tears~~ might now prevail with thee, to ~~repair the loss of thy~~ ^{at the} presence in my sinful soul: Lord let the greatness of my folly in sinning, extol the richness of thy mercy in forgiving.

Restore me to the joy of thy salvation, and establish me with thy free spirit; so shall I have the comfort, and thou the praise of my deliverance.

If thou, Lord, wilt give me understanding to delight in thy law, I shall also have a sweet assurance, that thou wilt delight in me to do me good.

Accept of my desires, strengthen mine endeavours, perfect my performances, pardon my weakness, assist my willingness, forgive my foolishness, nourish the good motions of thy holy spirit in me, and for thy mercy sake remove all dangers, and temptations from me; that when the short and wretched race of my imperfect holiness is ended here, I may solemnize that eternal sabbath with the blessed saints and angels in thy kingdom, and rest with thee in perfection of true happiness for ever.

*all
for
Jesus
sake*

AMEN.



O let my soul now lose itself in the unknown paths of heavenly contemplation; let me this day apprehend thee (O my Saviour) fasting, praying, weeping, groaning, sweating, bleeding, fainting, dying for my sake, and now pleading to my God for mercy for me: let me now taste the sweetness of that mercy by a lively faith, the fulness of this sweetness by a blessed hope, the fruition of this fulness by eternal love.

*may
would* Lord, how unworthy am I of these embraces, if I bewail ~~not~~, if I ~~abhor~~ ~~not~~, if I ~~for~~sake ~~not~~ all the wretched failings of my sinful life past; if I rejoice ~~not~~ with joy unspeakable, and glorious, to be admitted to so great a mercy; if ~~this~~ inflame ~~not~~ mine affections with unspotted love to thee my God, with earnest longings for thy presence of grace in this life, of glory in that to come.

And now, Lord, since thou in thy rich love hast freely forgiven me my pounds, I will also most willingly and heartily forgive my brother his pence; I will have nothing to do with malice, that had so much need of mercy: I will unfeignedly, and freely and fully forgive all injuries on earth; I will love all those that hate me, and pray for all those that despitefully use me; and all this for thy sake who hast freely loved me, and laid down thy life for me, to whom be glory for ever.—AMEN.

Blessed Lord God,

LOOK down in mercy and compassion on me, thy poor distressed supplicant, whom thou now vouchsafest to admit unto thy heavenly banquet; illuminate my blindness by the blessed light of thy most sacred word, satisfy my hunger with the sweet refreshings of thy gracious presence, enrich my poverty with the gifts and graces of thy holy spirit; cover my nakedness with the precious robes of thine own righteousness; swallow up the depths of my misery by the height of thy mercy, that I may this day appear before thee with a sincere heart, and happy soul.

Lord, strengthen and support my feeble faith, make me joyfully to trust in thee, constantly to rely upon thee, thankfully to sacrifice my soul in praises to thee.

Vouchsafe, dear Lord, that I may worthily approach thy blessed table, that I may this day be so united to thee, that all my joy and comfort may hereafter be for ever with thee.—AMEN.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTAINING PIOUS EJACULATIONS AT THE
TIME OF RECEIVING.

LORD,

THOU art that blessed bread, by which my soul is nourished to eternal life; thou art that fruitful vine, from which doth flow those gladdening comforts to my fainting spirit.

Thou wert broken for my sins, thou wert bruised for my transgressions, and the chastisement of my peace was upon thee: Lord, by thy stripes let my sinful soul be healed.

Thou tookest into thy hands the cup of trembling, thou drankest out the very dregs thereof, and thy precious blood was poured out like water for my sake.

Sweet Jesus, sustain me by this bread, refresh me with this wine, recover me with this potion, cleanse me by this effusion, that I may this day receive joyfully, return thankfully, live righteously, and die happily.

CHAP. IX.

CONTAINING A BRIEF MEDITATION, AND PIOUS
THANKSGIVING AFTER OUR RECEIVING.

I AM this day joyfully delivered from the bondage of sin and satan, and happily restored into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; I have relished the sweetness of his heavenly promises, and received the seal of his gracious performances; I now enjoy that blessed peace of God which passeth all our understanding. My deliverance is wonderful, my freedom absolute, my peace unalterable, my joy unutterable: my conscience is now quieted, my spirit ravished, mine enemies vanquished, and my God well-pleased.

TO thee, therefore, O thou blessed Fountain of eternal sweetness, do I address my joyful soul, to love and honor thee to my lives end. Lord Jesus accept of me, and so powerfully and graciously assist me, that I may savingly behold thee in thy blessed promises, that I may happily enjoy thee in thy holy ordinances; that I may clearly see, and joyfully confess what great things thou hast done for my poor soul; that I may be daily ravished with apprehen-

sion of thine exceeding love, and hourly busied with recounting thy endless praise.

Lord, make me to forsake the sins and miseries of this life; make me more watchful over my corrupt heart, more zealous of thy glory and thy childrens good; that I may never willingly offend thee, but wholly sacrifice the short remainder of my days unto thee; that so my heart and my flesh may triumphantly rejoice in thee the living God,

Mortify my corruptions, support my weakness, accept my willingness; let this my humiliation before thee, be a pleasing sacrifice unto thee, for his alone sake, whose precious life thy rich mercy hath sacrificed to thy justice for me. Lord hear me, have mercy on me for his alone sake, whom thou hast freely given unto me, that I may truly love thee, devoutly serve thee, and earnestly embrace thee.

CHAP. X.

UPON A JOURNEY UNDERTAKEN, AND THE MANY
DANGERS INCIDENT THEREUNTO.

I AM now going from mine own home, and know not whether I shall ever return; God, I know, hath set a period to my days, beyond which I cannot pass, but when, or where, or how my life shall end, I am uncertain. Many are the dangers that attend this sinful life, and many more my sins that have deserved them, I can neither number the one, nor foresee the other, this is the wretched and sad condition of my body, and (without unfeigned sorrows of my sins,) the much more woeful case of my distressed soul.

Lord, there is nothing so sweet as thy love, nothing so safe as thy protection, and yet I have carelessly neglected the one, and thou mayest not justly deny me the other; thou hast wooed me to mercy, and I have refused to come; thou hast graciously invited me by thy continual preservations, by thy fatherly sustentations, by thy gentle corrections, by thy faithful promises, and thy rich performances.

Blessed Lord, how wonderful are thy compassions towards me, when I am unthankful for thy many

favours, when I am unmindful of mine own miseries, even then thou graciously providest for me, and yet for all this, I have not hitherto resolved seriously to come unto thee.

Such, and so many are my sins, so great is my unthankfulness, that I now tremble to appear before thee; and yet so tender is thy mercy to me, that thou again allurest me to comfort and contentment. Lord, into the blessed bosom of thy love I cast myself for safety and protection, and in the midst of danger, even in death itself will joyfully rely upon thee.

FOR thou, O Lord, art my strong rock and fortress, unto which I will always resort: Lord keep me as the apple of thine eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.

Strengthen my weak faith against the strong assaults of satan; support and comfort me in all the fears and terrors of mine own accusing conscience; protect and keep me in this present journey; let thy holy angels be my blessed guardians, to protect me in life, to preserve me in death, and to assist me after death.

O let me never grieve those blessed spirits, (which though invisible, yet more assuredly are my attendants;) Lord, as thou hast given them readiness and cheerfulness of mind to watch my preservation, and further my salvation, so give me carefulness and

constancy of soul to enjoy them in my life and conversation.

And seeing, Lord, I cannot know my hour of dissolution, O teach me so to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto heavenly wisdom; that I may obtain a sweet assurance of thy love in Christ; unfeigned sorrow for my sins, a sincere and constant heart to thy service, and a chearful readiness at thy call.—AMEN.



CHAP. XI.

CONTAINING PIOUS MEDITATIONS, AND ZEALOUS EJACULATIONS AFTER A JOURNEY.



I AM now by God's gracious providence returned safe unto mine earthly home, but am still travelling to my heavenly : there is nothing in this life but labour and sorrow, nothing in that but rest and happiness, and yet, I dote upon the one, and neglect the other. . Lord, if my treasure were with thee, my heart would be there also : when thou givest me more knowledge of thee, I shall have more desire to come unto thee : when my sins have made me more sensible of mine own misery, thy grace, (I trust) will make me more capable of thy sweet mercy. .

Lord, if this vain unquietness be so refreshing to ~~thy~~ mortal body, how truly blessed will thy heavenly rest be to mine immortal soul? when thou Lord, wilt wipe away all tears from mine eyes, all aking from my heart ; when there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, not crying, nor any more pain ; when soul and body shall triumphantly and joyfully repose themselves in thee for ever : when they shall drink freely of the rivers of thy pleasures, and be for ever satisfied with the fatness of thy house.



I confels myself unworthy to enjoy this outward rest in this mine earthly home, much more unworthy to enjoy that inward rest, that sweet assurance of a lively hope, to be partaker of eternal rest: how-wretched is my body without this outward quietness? how much more wretched is my soul without thee? thou O Lord, art my shield, to defend me, my staff, to uphold me, my food to sustain me, my wine to glad me, my beloved to embrace me, my pleasure to delight me, my joy to ravish me, my sweet and safe repose for ever to refresh me.

Let this teach me, O Lord, to fix my thoughts on heaven and heavenly things; to use this world soberly in thee, and to thee; to view it (truly as it is) a barren wilderness, a transitory, vain, and empty thing, far inconsistent with my real happiness; to desire nothing, to enjoy nothing in the creature, but only in, and unto thee the great Creator; so shall no pleasure bewitch me, no unjust profit beguile me, no sudden sorrow dismay me, no terrors of conscience affright me.

TO thee, O thou sovereign of my soul, do I devote the remnant of my sinful days, to love thee, to praise thee, to honor thee, to rest in thee for ever.

Lord, wean me from the sins and miseries of this life, and raise my thoughts to immortality: let the sweetness of thy heavenly joys relieve the harshness

of my worldly sorrows, that misery may be swallowed up of mercy, and frailty of eternity.

Unite me in a blessed union with thee, that I may constantly adhere unto thee, and be for ever graciously accepted of thee: O give me a sweet complacency of soul in thy service, and a willing and a dutiful obedience unto thy commands.

Lord, give me a thankful heart for all thy mercies to me, for thy continual preservation, for thy blessed supportation, for the enjoyment of thy needful comforts in this life, and for the glorious hopes of those in that to come.

Blessed God, so sublimiate my sinful soul, that I may see the richness of thy love in Christ, that I may soberly enjoy thy blessings here, and faithfully expect thy joys hereafter.

Lord, all that I have ~~without~~ thee, is mere emptiness, and nothing, mere vanity, and worse than nothing; my glory, shame; mine honor, ignominy; my health, ruin; my riches, poverty; my gain, loss; my pleasure, pain; my laughter, madness.

Thou, O Lord, art all in all unto me, O grant that nothing may withdraw thy service from thee, that no inclining pleasure may allure me, that no distracting care, or sinful sorrow may disturb me, but that my soul may now and ever safely and contentedly rely upon thee.

Lord, thou see'st all my desires, and my continual groanings are not hid from thee : thou alone knowest how weary I am of the sinful travels of this life, how earnestly I long to be at rest with thee ; Lord pardon all my sins, and put an end to all my miseries ; come Lord Jesus, come quickly, wipe away all tears from mine eyes, and bring me to the rest of thine which never shall have end.—AMEN.



CHAP. XII.

UPON THE GREAT DANGER OF SECURITY.

DECEIVE not thyself, O my soul, it is not so easy a matter to inherit heaven as thou imaginest; there will be much fighting, sweating, bleeding, much compunction of soul, subjection of body, hard pressing towards the mark for the price of the high calling in Christ Jesus, before this happy conquest can be gained.

Consider, therefore, in what condition thou now standest, what ground thou hast gained of thy corrupt nature, how much better thou art this day, than the day past, than the year past, than thy whole life past; nay, rather how much worse by adding sin unto sin, by drinking in iniquity like water, by treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of thy righteous judgment.

Philosophy will tell thee, that in all natural motions, the nearer they are to ending, the more violent their motion is: divinity will tell thee, that in old age, thou wilt be fat, and well-liking: what increase of love hast thou to God's law? what growth of hatred against sin? what bosom-sin hast thou parted with? what gracious improvement hast thou made in knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and all

those other gifts and graces, which concur to thy perfection?

Holy Saint *Anselm* was often heard to say, if I could from hence behold the pains of hell, from thence the horror of sin, I would rather embrace those pains, than this horror. O what growth of grace was here! how far am I from this degree of holiness? how easily persuaded to delude myself with shews and shadows of perfection? There is no attaining unto happiness without holy violence, without bearing down my body, without cherishing my soul; if I conquer not here, I cannot triumph hereafter.

Lord, when I look into the strictness of the lives of thy saints, I much lament the folly of mine own; I see holy *David* in sackcloth and ashes, consuming whole days and nights in mourning for sin, washing his bed with his tears, afflicted in body, tormented in soul, grieving, crying, roaring, for uneasiness of heart. Blessed *Paul* subduing his body, by fasting, watching, praying, toiling in the ministry, and thou my blessed Saviour, in continual labour and sorrow for my sake: how vain is my trust, how false my hope, how great my error to believe I run, when I stand still? to expect a triumph without a victory, a victory without a combat.—Lord, if many that strive to enter in at the strait gate, yet shall not be able: what shall become of

me? who art so far from coming to thee; that I every day am running from thee; who am not only opposite unto thee, but even enmity itself against thee.

Sometimes I feel the stings and gripings of a wounded conscience, I know myself to be a grievous sinner, but I quiet my disturbances by thee my Saviour, I will willingly accept of mercy from thee, but grudgingly repine at service to thee; thou biddest me indeed to drink freely of the waters of life, but thou commandest me also to make my calling and election sure; to work out my salvation with fear and trembling; thou ordainest not the end without the means; if I rebelliously neglect the one, thou mayest most righteously deny me the other: Lord, what can it profit me to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, when I deprive my soul of happiness for ever!

O let this teach me to deplore my dangerous condition, to go on cheerfully in the ways of godliness, to think no cost too much, no pains too great, no grief too good, ~~to purchase heaven~~; to consider seriously, that time once past can never be recalled, that this hour may be my last, and bring me to eternity of torments; where the stream is stillest, there the channel is deepest; where there is least distrust, there is usually most danger, Satan therefore disturbs me not, because I sleep in death; but when thou
*X to endure for this sinner who
 did to redeem my poor
 guilty soul from sin,
 death & hell*

Lord, shalt open mine eyes to see the subtilty of this deceiver, I shall then find, that *the waters* (of sin) *are gone over my soul*, that I am woefully drowned in the great depth of security, and can expect nothing (without mercy) but satan's cruelty, and mine own endless misery.

TO that sweet mercy, therefore, I appeal, with earnestness of soul, and humbleness of heart, bemoaning my sins, bewailing my transgressions.

O Lord, my God, when I consider of thy gracious goodness, and mine own vileness, I am utterly ashamed to appear in thy presence.

Thou hast often called me to repentance, but I have not hearkened unto thee, thou hast lovingly invited me to mercy, but I have wilfully refused; thou hast clothed me with thine own garments, and I have shamefully defiled it; thou hast enriched me with thy grace, and I have robbed thee of thine honor. All this, and infinitely more than this, thou hast freely done for me, the worst of sinners, and yet for all this I have rebelliously forsaken thee, and most ungraciously been most unmindful of thee.

And now, Lord, seeing that I am dead and putrified in sins, and rotten in corruptions, what else can I expect from thee, but to be buried out of thy sight? and yet thou still sayest unto me, live.

O thou blessed Fountain of eternal good, convey those happy streams of comfort to my sinful soul, that may revive me from the grave of misery; open mine eyes, that I may see thee in thy long patience, in thy great goodness, in thy rich mercies, in thy fatherly affections towards me.

I am woefully sunk into the deep mire of sin, where no stay is; Lord, uphold me by thy grace, that I perish not eternally; O deliver me for thy mercy sake, for I am helpless and poor, and my heart is wounded within me.

Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, and thy judgments shall help me.

As thou hast raised me by thy power, so rule me by thy providence, that thy grace may be far sweeter with my sufferings than my pleasure with my sins.

Restrain my loose desires, renew my good purposes, assist my weak endeavours, correct mine errors, sustain my infirmities; give me a godly sorrow for my sins, and a thankful heart for thy favors, a filial fear of thy judgments, a sincere love to thy laws, an holy constancy, and happy perseverance to my lives end.—AMEN.

CHAP. XIII.

UPON THE GREAT DANGER OF PRESUMPTION.

ALAS, my soul, how vain art thou! how ~~how~~ wretched, to presume upon the mercy of thy God! how canst thou be so foolish to believe, that God will favor thee in that which he so severely punished in his own Son? thinkest thou that precious blood was spilt to cherish sin? Be not mistaken, for as Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, so he came also to call sinners to repentance. Dost thou argue well, to say, because God is merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness, therefore I will abuse his mercy in sinning, his patience by my long continuing in sin, his great goodness by my great unthankfulness? Is not this to mock his mercy, to bid defiance to justice, to arm him with fury, to invite him to revenge? Assure thyself, the longer he is in drawing his bow, the more forcible will he send his arrow.

Deceive not thyself therefore, God will not be so merciful to thee, as to be unjust to himself; all the ways of God are mercy and truth; mercy to support thy weakness, truth to correct thy wilfulness: there is therefore mercy with him, that he

may be feared, not that he may be slighted, not that he may be shamefully dishonored: how full of falsehood is thy bold presumption? thou cryest, peace, peace, when sudden war is ready to destroy thee; there is no peace to the wicked, saith my God; heaven and earth are up in arms against thee, and there is none left, not so much as thine own conscience to deliver thee.

Thou hast graciously received the knowledge of the truth, thou hast grievously sinned against the light of that knowledge, thou hast woefully continued in thy sins, without remorse of conscience, without desire of repentance, and there now remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and violent fire, that should devour the adversaries.

O remember, that the angels, for one sin, were thrown down from heaven, and that *Adam*, for one sin, was cast out of paradise: thy sins (O my soul) are innumerable, thou hast had line upon line, and precept upon precept, and yet thou addest sin upon sin, and transgression upon transgression: thou hast sinned against many precious promises, against many gracious performances, against many fearful judgments; thou hast grieved that good spirit, by which the saints are sealed up unto the day of redemption: all these are heavy aggravations upon thee, to fill

up the measure of thy sins, and hasten the swiftness of thy punishments.

Ah, how sad is thy condition! thou hast not only wearied out thyself, in wickedness, but thy God also: hear what he saith unto thee, how he complaineth of thee by his holy prophet, "behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is laden with sheaves," Amos 2, 13; and yet thou still addest more load; but as thou addest sin upon sin, so thou callest for wrath upon wrath; as thou hast made a mock at sin, so God will make a mock at misery; as thou hast thy measure in sinning, so God will have his measure in punishing; consider what he saith unto thee by his prophet, "judgment will I lay to the rule, and righteousness to the balance," Mai. 2, 17, 18: As he hath a bottle for thy tears, so he hath a bag for thy transgressions, Job. 14, 17: their growth is recorded, their number accounted, their nature examined, all sealed up against the great and fearful day of the revelation of the righteous judgment.

Consider this, thou that forgettest God, lest he tear thee in pieces, and there be none to deliver thee. Think how suddenly thou mayest be snatched away by those infernal fiends, to endless torments, and then what tears will be enough to weep thine obsequies, to quench those everlasting burnings?

But then, alas, instead of tears of compassion, thou shalt have mocks of derision, the cursed devils will laugh thee to scorn, the blessed saints and angels will rejoice at thy confusion, and God himself, who only can relieve thee, will for ever hide his tender mercy from thee.

Awake therefore, out of thy sleep of death, look well into thy lost estate, thou art now near unto making up the measure of thy sins, beyond which thou canst not pass: thy God hath said to thee, as to the sea, hitherto shalt thou go, and here shalt thou stay thy proud waves. Think how suddenly thou mayest be called to thy last account, even this very hour (for ought thou knowest) those cursed spirits may convey thee to thy fiery prison. O think how powerfully the wrath of God will then seize upon thee; how woefully wilt thou excruciate thyself with apprehension of thy former folly; and last of all, how wretchedly thou art for ever banished from eternal joys, to suffer with the damned in eternal torments: let this move thee to amend thy wicked ways, to cry mightily to God for mercy, to judge thyself, to condemn thyself, that thou mayest not be judged of the Lord; to kiss the Son lest he be angry, and so thou perish from the right way: if his wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him. Turn therefore, unto the Lord thy God, O my soul,

for he is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Blessed Lord,

AS an unfeigned sign of my repentance, in anguish of heart, and bitterness of soul, I earnestly desire to search into the secrets of my sinful thoughts, to unbosom all my sins, and lay them open to the view of all thy saints, that thou mayest have the glory, they the good, and I the shame of my confession, that so this penitent sense of mine iniquities (which I thankfully acknowledge cometh alone from thee) may be an evidence unto me, that thou wilt also give me pardon for them.

Lord, I willingly confess myself to be a great and grievous sinner, mine original defiled, my birth polluted, mine infancy stained, my youth ensnared, my manhood corrupted, mine age befuddled.

Mine imaginations vain, my thoughts sinful, my words wicked, mine actions abominable, my whole life a very sink of sin and all uncleanness.

When thy hand hath been heavy upon me, I have then promised the amendment; when thy rod hath been taken off from me, I have again returned to mine evil courses; this plainly sheweth, that I have hitherto sought but myself in thee, and may therefore justly fear to be forsaken of thee.

I have been undutiful to thee my God, envious and uncharitable to my neighbour, hypocritical to the world, deceitful to mine own soul.

My thoughts have been wanton, my desires lascivious, my actions unclean.

I have been blind to thy precepts, deaf to thy promises, dumb in thy praises, lame in thy services, sick at thine ordinances, dead to thine embraces.

I have broken all my promises, I have slighted all thy threatenings, I have abused all thy mercies, I have rejected all thy favors, I have delayed my repentance, I have resisted the checks of mine own conscience, I have quenched the motions of thy blessed spirit, and turned thy grace into wantonness; and yet, as if all this had been too little to condemn me, I have most daringly presumed on thy mercy, and most ungraciously resolved to go on in my impieties.

Lord, thou hast promised to forgive those that repent, to ease those that are heavy laden, to raise up those that are fallen, to satisfy those that are hungry, and to bind up those that are broken-hearted.

O Lord my God, I earnestly desire to repent, I am laden with a burthen insupportable, I am feeble and sore smitten with the terrors of thy law, my flesh trembleth, and my heart fainteth; I am fallen

into the very mouth of hell, I am sorely wounded with the remorse of mine own accusing conscience, and hungry for the sweet refreshings of thy saving grace.

Thou, O Lord, hast made me sensible of this my great misery, and thou alone canst make me capable of thy rich mercy; unto that mercy therefore, I appeal, with sighs in my soul, and sorrow in my heart.

O thou, which art the blessed Fountain of all goodness, which desirest not the death of a sinner; but rather that he should repent and live, have mercy upon me.

O thou, which art the Saviour of the world, which camest to seek, and to save those which were lost, have mercy upon me.

O holy, and for ever blessed spirit, thou which feedest and refreshest the distressed souls of thine elect, have mercy on me.

Let thy power (O blessed Father) support my weakness; thy wisdom (O blessed Son) supply my folly; thy love (O blessed Spirit) restrain my wilfulness; that as thou art eternally one, so I may for ever be at unity with thee, although most woefully divided in myself.

Lord, as thou hast given me a heart to pray unto thee, so give me also a soul to praise thee, and a fervent resolution to perform those promises I make unto thee.

Lord sweeten all my sorrows by thy blessed sufferings, enlarge my heart with thankfulness for thy many favors, strengthen my weak faith, restrain my rebellious nature, increase daily in me the gifts and graces of thy blessed spirit; endue me with a perfect hatred against all sin; and grant, dear God, that daring and presumptuous sins may never have dominion over me.—AMEN.



CHAP. XIV.

UPON QUENCHING THE MOTIONS OF GOD'S
HOLY SPIRIT.

CONSIDER, O my soul, from whence these happy thoughts arise; and wherefore, if they were from nature, they must needs favor of corruption; but now they are from grace, they summon thee to goodness, they becken thee to immortality: thy God now calleth thee to repentance; he offers thee his gracious pardon for thy sin, his love, his protection, his peace; his grace, his glory: he now wooeth thee to favor, and thou (a woeful wretch) convicted by thine own accusing conscience, condemned by divine justice, rebelliously rejectest all these gracious offers: ah, what woeful folly is this! nay, rather what wilful madness! As there is a time of calling, so there will be a time of rejecting; the blessed wind of God's holy spirit bloweth but where it listeth; when it is once gone, thou knowest not whether it shall ever return: "God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," Rom. 9. Ah woe be unto that soul whose time of calling is once past; a thousand worlds cannot redeem its loss, if thou wilt not now embrace these comfortable breathings of his tender

love, thou shalt then endure the bitter storms of his incensed wrath.

If thou wilt not embrace his mercy, thou shalt exalt his justice: "I called unto you (saith God) and ye refused to come, I held out my hand, and ye would not look towards me; therefore will I forsake you in your extremity, when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer, they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Prov. 1. 24, 27, 28.

God's clemency and patience in this life, will assuredly exasperate his fury and revenge, in that to come; as his mercy is unutterable, so his justice is intollerable, both are his divine being, and therefore both must needs be infinite; both are to manifest his glory, and therefore both must be eternal.

From hence is that expression of *St. Paul*, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," Heb. 10. From hence it is that wicked men are left unto their own swing in this life, that they may be payed home with Gods wrath in that to come.

Let this teach me, O my soul, to welcome these endeared motions of the gladding spirit, to thirst for them, to rejoice in them, to think no thought too dear to be dislodged for them.

Blessed Lord, I hear thee calling thy holy apostle Saint *Peter*, and I see him readily forsaking all to follow thee; how often hast thou called me a sinful wretch, by the sweet motions of thy blessed spirit; and I have hitherto refused to forsake the very least of all my sins, for thy sake, who willingly forlooked all the pleasures of this life for mine: long hast thou waited my repentance, but I have yet hated to be reformed. Mercy hath been offered, and I have not esteemed it, Judgment hath been threatened, and I have not regarded it; thou hast not only whispered unto me by thy gracious visits of thy blessed spirit, but thou hast even called me aloud, by thy divine hand of wholesome chastisement: by loss of friends, by loss of means, by loss of health, by loss of liberty, (and without thy rich mercy) by the great danger of that greater loss of thy gospel, and thereby of thy gracious presence in this life, and thine eternal joys in that to come. All this my sins have justly brought upon me, and yet for all this, my wretched heart desires to be a stranger to thee.

Lord, who am I that thou so graciously invitest unto mercy? Lord, what am I that now presume to speak unto thee? I am so deformed, and contemptible, that mine own knowledge cometh far short of mine own misery. O how justly mightest thou for ever leave me to myself, to eat the fruit of

mine own ways, and to be filled with the falshood of mine own devices, to possess sorrow, and inherit shame? but thou, O Lord, who art infinite in goodness, hast manifested to my sinful soul, that when I wretchedly forsake thee, thou readily forsakest all to follow me; when I run from thee, thou bewailest me, when misery compels me to return, thou joyfully receivest me, thou lovingly relievest me, thou then graciously acceptest of me; and now, O Lord, when I have even wearied out thy mercy and compassion towards me, thou still invitest me to come unto thee.

TO thee, therefore, O thou blessed shepherd of my soul, do I devote these penitent expressions. O let those tributary tears, which are due to thy sufferings, be now plentifully poured forth for mine own sins. Lord pardon my contempt of grace, and graciously enable me to entertain these happy visits of thy holy spirit, and patiently to bear these sweet chastisements of thy heavenly hand, that I may have fellowship with Christ, and peace with God.

If thou, Lord, for the sins of my prosperity, shalt think it fit to bring upon me the miseries of adversity, for the great neglect of thy gracious visits, to deny me the sweet comforts of thy blessed answers, yet give me patience, and sure confidence to trust still in thy mercy, that so while I am most

justly debarred of my longing desires, I may not be utterly deprived of thy loving favors.

Lord, cast me not away from thy presence, O leave me not unto myself, lest I perish everlastingly ; make me to see the richness of thy love and favor towards me : quicken the motions of thy blessed spirit in me, renew my good thoughts, and fix them wholly upon heaven and heavenly things ; Lord Jesus make me joyful in them, and for ever truly thankful for them.

Make me willing to enjoy thee, and ready to abandon all things for thee : Lord, I now seek thee but I cannot find thee, I call upon thee, but thou answerest me not : O kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine.

Lord let thy left hand support me, and thy right hand embrace me, let it be outwardly, and inwardly sustained by thee ; my weakness by thy power, my rebellion by thine obedience, my folly by thy wisdom, my pollution by thy sanctification, my faith by thy fruition, that I may be grieved for thine absence, delighted in thy presence, enamored with thy beauty, enriched with thy bounty, inflamed with thy love, adorned with thy graces, comforted with thy consolation, encompassed with thy glory.—
AMEN.

CHAP. XV.

UPON THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD'S PECULIAR
PROVIDENCE TO HIS CHILDREN.

LORD,

NOTHING can befall me in this life, without thy wife, and over-ruling providence: not so much as one hair of me can fall without thy allowance, for even my very hairs are numbered; as a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, so neither a hair from mine head without thy sacred leave: and if thy blessed providence protecteth these inferior creatures, if it extend itself even unto excrements, how much more safely dost thou guard the bodies, how much more tenderly the souls of thine elect? Yet, such is my stupidity by nature, that I seldom look beyond the second causes; I usually content myself with casuals and contingencies, and often judge that merely accidental, which sweetly moves by thy commands, to thine appointment, and thy childrens good.

Thy providence is eternal, thy provision in time; thou, O Lord, art infinitely wise, and canst therefore provide infinitely well, the end thou ordainest to thyself, the means to thy creature; good and bad

are under thy protection; the good for themselves, the bad for others; both for thy glory; the one thou willest to be happy, the other thou permittest to be miserable: ~~neither of them can avoid their necessity of fate,~~ and yet thou neither inclinest the one, nor enforceest the other, because unto both in their original thou gavest perfect freedom of evil, to chuse the good, to leave the bad; to inherit life, or purchase death..

Blessed God, we are all debtors in our first parents, thou mayest therefore most justly require that of us, which was lent us in them; they were able to pay, but not willing; we, their woeful posterity (as we are in nature) are neither able, nor willing; but by thy grace, Lord, we are only willing and not able; and thou hast therefore sent thine only Son, who was both freely willing, and fully able, to appease thy justice, to reconcile thy mercy, to comfort us here, to crown us hereafter..

And now, Lord, having given us thy Son, how shalt thou not, together with him also, give us all things? and yet I often see thee giving of good things to the bad, and bad to the good: there is nothing more frequent in this life, than the afflictions of thy children, nothing more common than the prosperity of the wicked, they receive their good things in this life. I shall enjoy mine in that to

come, when I shall be comforted, and they tormented. Thou, O Lord, art righteous in all thy ways, and holy in all thy works; thou loadeſt them with thine outward bleſſings, for their outward obedience; thou denieſt me theſe outward favors, for mine inward advantage; by the one they are left inexcusable, by the other I am made more conformable; my patience exerciſed, my faith tried, my love examined, my humility proved; all theſe are ſpecial tokens of thy mercy towards me, for as grace increaſeth here, ſo ſhall glory hereafter.

Lord, what can he fear that is aſſured of thy favor, that knoweth aſſuredly, that all theſe outward things ſhall work together for the beſt to his advantage: If *Joſeph* be thrown into the pit, it is to ſend him into Egypt; if into priſon, to prefer him to *Pharaoh*, that ſo corn may be ſent into Canaan; if ſatan be ſent to tempt *Job* with afflictions, it is becauſe *Job* ſhall overcome ſatan by patience; if holy *David* become a ſad ſpectacle of human frailty by ſinning, it is to make him a pattern of true piety in repenting; if the bodies of the ſaints be grievouſly martyred in this life, it is to array them with glorious robes in that to come.

Lord, let this teach me joyfully to entertain the ſaddeſt of events, which either thy wiſdom, man's unrighteouſneſs, or ſatan's cruelty can bring upon me; to be patient under them, and thankful for

them ; to ransack my soul, and search diligently there, for what sin thou sendest this sorrow, to bewail it, abhor it, forsake it, and earnestly implore thy pardon for it : when I am thus happily resolved, I shall then have that undaunted boldness, to say with holy *Job*, although thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee with holy *David*, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear none evil, for thou Lord art with me ; and with the blessed apostle, that I know assuredly, that the sufferings of this life shall work for me a far greater and more exceeding weight of glory in that to come.

TO thee, therefore, O thou blessed guardian of my sinful soul, and wretched body, do I address myself for safety and protection.

I confess, O Lord, there is no one minute of my whole life can be safe without thy gracious providence, and yet so wretched have I been, that few or none of them have been devoted to thy service.

Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, and of all thy truth thou hast afforded me ; even the very best of all my actions hath justly merited the very worst of all thy punishments, and yet thou daily loadeest me with thy blessings, although I hourly sin against thee, by my great transgressions.

Forgive me my unmindfulness of these thy mercies, my great unthankfulness for all thy favors, and fix my sinful soul more willingly, more joyfully, more fervently, more constantly, in thy services.

Teach me to keep a catalogue of thy mercies, to let none pass without a thankful and devout acknowledgment; to set some days apart from the year, some hours from each day to praise thee for them.

Forgive the pride of my posterity, my carelessness of thee, my coldness unto thine, my crossness unto others, my cruelty to myself.

Lord, pardon my repinings in adversity, my distaste of thy power, my distrust of thy providence, my denial of thy wisdom, my refusal of thy love, my contempt of thy favor, my neglect of thy grace, my despair of thy goodness.

O give me such a blessed frame of heart, that I may chearfully and joyfully content myself, to walk in whatsoever paths thy blessed providence shall lead me to: O hold thou up my going in those paths, that my feet slip not; teach me to make a gracious and a sweet improvement of these outward crosses, a blessed and a wise advantage of thine inward graces: Lord lead me by thy counsel here, and afterwards receive me to thy glory. — AMEN.

CHAP. XVI.

UPON SINFUL ANGER, AND THE GREAT DISTURBANCE THEREOF.

LORD,

WHEN I consider of thy patience, and long-suffering towards me, a miserable sinner, of the lowliness of thy saints, and of the great humility and meekness of my Saviour in his sufferings, I much deplore the woeful weakness of mine own infirmities, and more admire the richness of thy goodness, in admitting me to speak unto thee.

What pleasure, Lord, canst thou take in that service which is all sin? how canst thou delight in that which thou abhorrest? thou art a God of pure eyes, and canst not behold iniquity; if all my righteousness be in thy sight as filthy rags and menstruous clothes, how full of ugliness and deformity, will my sins then appear before thee?

Ah Lord, thou hast often seen how easily, how suddenly, how wretchedly I have been swallowed up of sinful passion; how I have violated that invaluable peace which thou hast given me, by revengeful thoughts, by despiteful words, by disturbing actions, I know nothing in my corrupt nature,

but to know myself miserable; I see nothing in this misery, but terror and confusion, affliction to my body, destruction to my soul; all occurrences of this life should have rather added to my growth of grace, than disturbance of nature: I have hitherto been grossly mistaken, in calling that a defect of my body, which is in truth an error in my soul: nature was at first created pure, no disobedience was then in the passions, man hath married it by his fall: all the streams that are now troubled, flow from this fountain; this barren excuse therefore is so far from lessening sin, that it makes it bigger. I am now so much the more stained by committing actual sin, as I should have been more holy, and am not, since original.

Lord, let this teach me to do truly with my soul, to uncloath myself of all sinful excuses, that so sin may appear truly what it is, and may become out of measure sinful; that mine anger may be holy, my application of it happy, that nothing may disturb me but sin; that I may be a lion in thy cause, a lamb in mine own; that when I hate the sin, I may love the person; when I rebuke the offence, I may pray heartily for the offender; so shall I zealously enjoy thee my God, religiously embrace my neighbour, patiently possess mine own soul.

AND now, Lord, as thou hast given me an heart to confess my sins of impatience before thee, so give me a sweet assurance in my Saviour, that by him I have assured pardon for them.

If thou Lord, for my sinful anger, shalt inflict upon me thy severe wrath, and for my long continuing in my sins, the long duration of thy punishments; yet let not thy severity exceed the measure of my christian charity; though thou continuest my miseries, yet withdraw not thy mercies, O make me more and more humble unto thee my God, and more and more meek amongst thy children: conform me to that blessed pattern of true piety and patience; that as a sheep in thy hands, (my blessed shearer) so I may be dumb, and not open my mouth against thee.

Lord, banish from me all desires of revenge; let patience have its perfect work, to quiet me here, and crown me hereafter.

I confess myself to be a great and grievous sinner, and yet I am thy creature; my body is thine, and my soul is thine, both were joined in thy creation, and both joined in my devotion; both have sinned against thee, O let them both be humbled before thee, not to satisfy thy justice, but to implore thy mercy; not to merit thy grace, but to magnify thy goodness.

Lord, make me truly sensible of the greatness of my misery, that I may the more devoutly, the more sincerely sue to thee for mercy: forgive the many violent eruptions of my sinful passions, give me a meek and humble spirit, that I may happily enjoy thy presence, and mine own content. Lord grant that I may patiently and joyfully embrace the wrongs and injuries of this life, for thy sake, who hast been patient even to death for mine.

Let that be made easy unto me by thy grace; which by nature is impossible, that nothing may delight me, but thy love, nothing grieve me, but thy displeasure, nothing offend me, but thy dishonor.—
AMEN.



CHAP. XVII.

UPON MAN'S INORDINATE LOVE TO THE
CREATURE.

WHE is me that I am constrained to live in *Mesheth*, and to dwell in the tents of Cedar; who is me that I was conceived in sin, that I was born in sin, and that I have so long been captive to the power of sin: how vain am I, how wretched to beguile myself of rest and quietness? O how unworthy to defile my marriage-vows, to prostitute my love to these unclean and false embraces, of a sinful world, to dig unto myself these broken cisterns of impure and empty joys, and to forsake those living waters of eternal life: O woeful catiff, if I well consider what I am; but far more woeful, if I seriously consider what I should be.

Lord, when I was in my blood, thou saidst unto me, live; when I was cast out, and no eye pitied me, then thou hadst mercy on me; when I was naked, thou clothed me; when I was wounded, thou healed me; nay, more, Lord, thou didst uncloath thyself for me, and by thy wounds I am healed; when I was loathsome in mine own eyes, I

was beautiful in thine, and when all this is not yet enough to manifest thy wonderful compassions towards me, thou feedest me at thine own table, thou lodgest me in thine own bosom, thou makest me partaker of thine own inheritance.

Blessed God, what couldst thou have done more for me that thou hast not done? And yet for all this I forsake thee, I neglect thee, I abuse thee, I adulterate those many vows and promises I made unto thee. And now, Lord, when I am even ashamed to present myself before thee, when my false heart hath been so great a stranger to thy blessed bosom, that I am even afraid to kneel to thee for mercy; thou graciously forgivest me, thou be-moanest my sin, thou hidest my shame, thou makest love unto me, and (to the wonder of my soul) delightest still to set thy love upon me.

Thou, O my blessed Saviour hast told me, that if I were of this world, it would love me, but now I am not of this world, that the world hateth me: Lord, what madness is this in me to love mine utter enemy? to delight in her bosom, which hunteth for my precious life? to forsake thee, the pleasant lilly of the vallies, the sweet refreshments of eternity, to weary out, and wound my soul amongst the bryars of this barren wilderness? Thou Lord, hast said unto me, arise my love, my fair one, and come away; thou inviteest me from the showers and tem-

pests of a stormy winter, from the cares and troubles of a discontented life, to the sweet dews of thy graces, the gentle breathing of thy spirit, the tender buds of thy love, the lovely blossoms of thy goodness, the pleasant fruit of thy promises, the joyful crop of thy performances : and notwithstanding all this I still cry,—yet a little more sleep, yet a little more slumber, yet a little more folding of the hands together ; yet a little more sin, yet a little more shame, yet a little more sorrow.

Ah, Lord, what is there in the creature, that thus strangely bewitcheth me ? or rather what is there not in it, that is not every minute ready to betray me, and despoil me of those precious ornaments of soul which thou hast given me ; the cares and crosses of this life afflict me, the pleasures before me, the prophets disturb me, pride puffeth me up, and even mine own heart deceiveth me, by calling good evil, and evil good ; by making that sweet in the expectation, which is bitter in the fruition : Lord, while I have sought the creature, I have lost myself, my body in distempers, my soul in distractions.

That precious faith which is the ground of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, whose end is the salvation of my soul, which is thy gift who art the God of truth, is now drowned in a sea of error, and justly given up to believe dreams.

and delusions, and doctrines of devils; to trust wholly in vanity, and to follow after lying.

That saving knowledge, by which I was formerly enlightened in thy sacred truths, is now blinded with the foggy mists of sin and ignorance; this Lord, is my great aggravation, and just condemnation, that light is come into the world, and I have loved darkness better than light.

That glorious hope which maketh not ashamed, but expecteth an inheritance eternal in the heavens, which fadeth not away, is now become a vain and empty hope delighted with sin, rewarded with shame.

Those blessed affections by which my happy soul was wont to walk in thy ways, and to delight itself in thy commands, are now wearied out in ways of wickedness; and that heart which hath so often promised obedience unto thee and thy laws, hath now forsaken thee the living God, and hath made a covenant with death and hell.

Thus am I robbed and spoiled of all, and am become poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked, and miserable; my whole head is sick, and my whole heart is faint; I have sown in iniquity, and must reap in affliction; I am intoxicated with the wine of error, that stings me like a serpent, and bites me

like a cockatrice: and yet, when I awake (such is the sadness of my present condition) I say, I will seek it yet still.

Lord, he that is once out of thy path, knoweth not the length of his journey, and may well fear to loose himself for ever.

And now, Lord, what is my hope? truly my hope is even in thee; thou seest my weakness, and accepteest my willingness: thou that knowest it impossible that the world should be overcome by me, biddest me be of good comfort; because thou (Lord) hast overcome the world for me; if I fight not against thee, though I am often foiled, yet I am more than conqueror in thee.

O let this teach me joyfully to rely upon thee, to make thee the height of my joy, the end of my desires, the only happy and eternal object of my sinful soul: Lord, I heartily desire thee, I thankfully embrace thee, and do for ever vow my soul and body to thee.

Suffer me not to wander from thy blessed presence; let me not longer dally nor dissemble with my soul; O let me not think that I then love thee, when I love but myself in thee; make me now at

Now those blessed things that belong to my
least they be for ever hid from mine eyes.

Lord, by thy rich mercy I can now plainly see
the vanity and emptiness of all these earthly objects,
the folly and misery of those that rest in them, the
rest and quietness of those that least rely upon them;
in this transitory beauty of the creature, I can now
behold the ravishing perfections of the great
Creator.

Lord, I now exceedingly desire to know thee,
that I may for ever love thee, that I may be sick of
love till I enjoy thee, that I may joyfully rest in
thee, and be eternally united to thee.

Blessed Lord God,

FOR thou, art infinitely sweeter than the
sweetness of thy creatures, they are all but emp-
tiness and vanity, but in thy presence is the fulness
of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for
evermore.

O thou blessed Fountain of eternal goodness, for-
give me mine offences, cover my sins, and fix my
soul upon the sweetness of thy heavenly joys, and
give constancy and steadiness of heart to cleave unto
thee, and for thy mercy sake remove all vain desires
that may betray me from thee.

O thou blessed Saviour of my sinful soul, by whose perfect obedience, all my disobedience is forgiven me, who hast given thyself for me, and to me, give me also unfeigned repentance, that I may heartily bewail the sinfulness of my life past, that I may make a gracious improvement of my life present, and faithfully perform the vows and promises which I make unto thee, for the short remainder of my life to come.

O blessed and eternal comforter of all those sinful souls that put their trust in thee, give me a sweet and full assurance of thy love in Christ; withdraw my wretched heart from vanity, inflame it with an earnest and affectionate desire to thee; open mine eyes, that I may see some glimpse of thy celestial joys prepared for me; make me often to think of them, earnestly to long for them, and readily and cheerfully to part with all these earthly pleasures to enjoy them.

Lord make me able to encounter and withstand the strong assaults of satan, and this evil world; give me thy saving grace, and take from me what thou wilt; without thy blessed presence, all these outward joys are weariness, and emptiness; without thee, even life itself is bitterness unto me; without thy love I ask it not of thee, yea, I rather beg thee (Lord) to take it from me, that so I may be joyfully released from the bondage of a sinful body, that I

may love thee with a pure and spotless soul, that all mine imperfections may be done away, that so I may securely dwell with thee, in perfect holiness, and endless happiness.—AMEN.



CHAP. XVIII.

UPON THE SIN OF UNCLEANNESSE, WITH ENCOURAGEMENTS TO AVOID IT.

CONSIDER, O my soul, in what a blessed relation thou now standest to thy God, thou hast lately grieved for thy sins, and God hath also graciously accepted of thy sorrow, and thou art now at peace and union with him; his holy spirit is thy comforter, his holy providence thy guide, his holy angels thy guardians, his holy saints thine assistants; the creatures without thee are at league and union with thee, and thy conscience within thee is a continual feast unto thee; while thus thou continuest, thy safety is inviolable, thy joy unutterable, thy peace unalterable.

Who can express the blessedness of this condition? how ravishing is this reviving presence of the gladdening spirit, by which thou art sustained sweetly here, by which thou shalt be joyfully refreshed hereafter?

Wilt thou now lose all this (O my soul) for this false, this foul, this momentary pleasure? wilt thou lodge this beastly sin, where thou now lodgest thy Redeemer? Consider how vain it is, how bitter it

will be; think how many sad thoughts, how many aching hearts, how many wounding sighs, this fall of thine will cost thee; what distempers of body, what disturbances of soul, what unquietness of sleep, what checks of conscience, what inward sadness in thy greatest merriment, and (which is worst of all) what a fearful apprehension of God's wrath in this life, and woeful expectation of judgment, and suffering of extremity of pains in hell for ever.

Let not the vain hope of God's mercy flatter thee; for while he is merciful, he will be just, yea, his mercy shall provoke his justice; if his patience and long-suffering do not lead thee into timely repentance, his wrath and fury shall surely lead thee out to greater condemnation.

If custom persuade thee, let custom also reclaim thee; if thy flesh murmur, thy spirit will rejoice: O how happy wilt thou find this opposition! how glorious this victory! even but one blessed thought of amendment, is of more value than an age of sin.

Holy St. *Augustine*, who was wont to nourish his lascivious flesh, and thought it then impossible to live without the lustful kisses of his *Roman* Dames, when once he had but relished the ravishing embraces of eternity, brake forth into the sweet and most divine expressions; "how truly sweet is the taste of this earthly sweetness! those transitory joys

which I was formerly afraid to lose, I now rejoice to banish; it was thou, O Lord, who didst thrust them out; it is thou, O Lord, who art entered in, who art sweeter than all sweetness, &c."

Lord let this example move me to a blessed imitation of this blessed saint, to take heed of holding conference with satan, to labour to repel the very first motions to sin; If I delight in his discourse, I shall soon consent to his counsel: if he feel me resist, I shall find him give ground. Lord, let me remember what I fight for, and follow my advantage with courage and success, that when my days of warfare shall determine, I may say, with joy and comfort, with thy blessed apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith, I have finished my course, from henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not unto me only, but unto all those that love and expect the day of his appearing." 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8.

LORD,

THOU hast often seen the weakness of thy sinful servant, how willingly, how wretchedly I have been yielding to the false allurements of my sinful flesh; how basely I have given ground, even upon the very first assault, without desire of resistance, without care of repentance.

I now behold thee in the flames of glory, and the
 too, that I have much distinguished in it, and often
 given thee, my God, as the source of wisdom for it.

Blessed God, now rich in that grace which I
 may be free, now glorious that grace which I pur-
 sue in thee, now wonderful that mercy I obtain
 from thee? and yet, how carnal, how earthly
 have I parted from thee? Lord forgive what is
 past, restrain what is present, prevent what is to
 come: O let me enjoy my foretaste but in thee,
 who art nearer to me than I can be to myself, who
 art sweeter to me than the foretaste of these earthly
 pleasures.

O give me such a blessed frame of heart, such
 angel-like integrity of soul, that my thoughts may
 be chaste, my desires holy, my words gracious, my
 actions good.

Give me a double portion of thy blessed spirit,
 that I may double my obedience to thy sweet com-
 mands, that I may taste the comforts of my heavenly
 joys, and utterly abhor the false allurements of this
 sinful world.

Let the sweet showers of thy distilling graces
 allay these motions of concupiscence, extinguish
 these devouring flames of lust, that I may constantly
 and happily oppose this darling sin to my last hour,
 and joyfully triumph with thee for ever.—ANS.

CHAP. XIX.

UPON IMMODERATE MIRTH, AND THE SINFUL
INCONVENIENCES THEREOF.

LORD,

IF I was this day to die; if thou shouldst now say unto me, give an account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward; if my audit was at this instant to be given up, and all mine actions this present hour to be accounted for, how sadly should I look upon that lost time which hath been spent in sin? How many vain *items* must needs appear to my deserved shame, and endless sorrow? So many minutes wasted in unclean and wanton cogitations; so many days and nights in frivolous and idle discourse; so many weeks, and months, and years, in vain and sinful actions: how full of horror and confusion would this account appear, even to mine own eyes; with what face should I dare present it unto thine? what would I not now give to purchase but some small respite to redeem this woeful waste, this vain expense of time? what serious vows and faithful promises should I now make of amendment? what constant hours would be now dedicated to thy service? my whole life

would now seem too little to bewail my folly, to redeem my lofs.

O what madnefs is it then, while I have days of mercy, to defpife them, to abufe them, to be utterly neglective of them? What is it, Lord, that I fo eagerly purfue? Even the very height of all mine outward happinefs, is but a fhort crackling of thorns, a fudden blaze, which may feem to warm me, but can never thoroughly heat me: woe be to that foul for ever, that can find no refrefhment but in this momentary fire; if thy grace, Lord, cannot warm me, thy glory will not comfort me.

There can be no true joy but in godly sorrow, "the heart of the wife is in the houfe of mourning, the heart of fools in the houfe of mirth," Eccl. 7. 6. The luxurious wanton may be carnally joyful, but the penitent chriitian is cordially merry.

There is no better trial of this truth (Lord) than from thine own mouth, who wert a man of sorrows; thou, O Lord, haft told me, that I fhall weep, but that the world fhall rejoice; that I fhall sorrow, but my sorrow fhall be turned into joy, and my joy fhall no man take from me, Job 16. 20.

Deceive not thyfelf therefore, (O my foul) for if thou walkeft too far in this enticing path, thou art out of thy way to heaven; and thou mayeft go fo

Art in it as to lose thyself, and by a customary freedom of thy christian liberty, soon find so great an indisposition unto God, and goodness, that unless the blessed Shepherd of thy soul vouchsafe to find thee, by his saving grace, it is improbable; nay, it is impossible that thou shouldst ever return.

Canst thou be so senseless to believe that thou art Christ's disciple, when thou wilt not bear his cross? Did ever any of his followers enjoy heaven without violence, without beating down their bodies, without cherishing their souls? without much weeping, fasting, praying, sighing, groaning for their sins? without being crucified unto the world, and the world unto them? without checking and controuling their unruly lusts? without utterly forsaking all this earthly rash, and joyfully accounting it at loss and dung to possess Christ?

Look upon the prophets, apostles, martyrs, virgins, fathers of the church, and all the blessed company of saints, in all times, places, ages of the world, and thou shalt find them all to use this world as if they used it not, quietly, sparingly, soberly; *Isaac* at his evening devotion in the solitary fields, *Elijah* at private *carmel*, the *Baptist* in the desert, *St. Paul* in his desires out of the body, and with Christ, holy *Simeon* in his pillar, *St. Jerome* in his cave;

all of them and innumerable more of God's saints; were true *Benonies*, sons of sorrow and affliction.

Lord, with how much fervor, and alacrity of soul, did these thy blessed ones pursue thy heavenly joys? what sharp combats had they to overcome themselves? And if such chosen and select vessels as these, have had such great strivings, such powerful conflicts with their sinful bodies, what will become of me? that have obeyed sin in the lusts thereof, that can find no pleasure but in folly, no laughter but in madness.

Consider therefore, O my soul, whilst thou hast yet time, that there is no truer character of a graceless heart, than prophane mirth; thou art too ready to believe, that God is merciful, that all thy sins may be forgiven thee in a moment; that the good thief was saved at the last hour, and that therefore thou mayst still go on in wickedness. God indeed is always ready to shew mercy, but it is only unto those that are ready to ready to repent: and how knowest thou whether God will accept thee in that hour? Whether he may not, whether he will not, then withdraw his saving grace from that sinful soul, which hath so long withdrawn itself from his service: this is that which thy blessed Saviour telleth thee, "Not every one which crieth, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that

doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,"
Matt. 7. 21.

And lest perhaps that one example of the dying penitent may flatter thee, consider of the time, the place, the manner of his strange conversion: "This was assuredly (saith St. Augustine) to manifest the power and Godhead of a dying Saviour, and that upon rare confession of an Infidel, and that at such a time, when all the world forsook him, and even his own disciples either doubted, or denied his Godhead."

Alas, how little comfort canst thou now reap from this example? how should it rather affright thee; to see but one soul amongst so many millions, to obtain mercy at the last hour, and that upon such weighty circumstances? on what a weak foundation dost thou build thy hopes of happiness? how easily will that devouring storm of thine accusing conscience ruin it? and then how great the fall will be, the fearful horror of thy lost estate will woefully express.

Lord, let this teach me to redeem those precious hours which I have lost: O let each wanton thought, each idle word, be monitors to tell me how my audit stands with heaven, I can speak nothing, I can do nothing, which I can recal; each circumstance of sin is charged in mine account, and must be

reckoned for: how careful should this make me of the expence of that time that is recorded for eternity. Thou, O Lord, art holiness itself, thy saints and angels are holy, and thy children must be holy; nothing but holiness can inherit heaven, no unclean pleasure, no impure joy shall enter there; how can I ever hope to be an inhabitant of that holy city, whose heavenly language I cannot speak?

And now, Lord, seeing these things are thus, by thine assisting grace, I seriously resolve to allow myself no pleasure in this life, but what is sanctified with moderation; because I clearly see these outward pleasures to be only so far useful unto me, as by them I am made more serviceable unto thee: moderate my honest repast, set an edge upon my soul, and make it more earnest, more active in devotion, when I take up pleasure as a trade, I become a traitor to my body, a tyrant to my soul.

Lord, I am now heartily in love with heaven, and grudge at that hour's liberty in outward merriment, that maketh not the next more eager of mine inward comfort: there is no sweetness but in goodness, and there is no goodness in that mirth which is not subordinate to this sweetness: christian liberty may be easily mistaken, and become licentious wickedness, there is often-times most danger in those things which seem most necessary, if not used with moderation.

And now Lord, having seriously considered ~~what~~ time is, and wherefore, I admire the folly, and lament the misery of all those whose only aim is to mispend it: my days are few, and full of evil, O let my greatest care be to husband my time well; I have much business, and great, to dispatch, and I know not whether this day's light may be my last; mine eternity of joy or sorrow, hath its dependance on this short moment: if I think upon it seriously, I shall grudge to spend one minute vainly: Lord, there is ~~no~~ distinction of time with thee; one day with thee, is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day; O let me seriously consider, that with me there is, that I must work while it is called to day, that mine hours are swift and short, that the night of death cometh, when I cannot work; that the end of all things cometh, when time shall be no more: By thy grace therefore I will piously devote the remnant of my life to holy duties, so shall mine age of sin be nothing in thy sight; and one day well spent (in thy remembrance) is as a thousand years.

Blessed Lord,

WILT thou accept of such a sinful creature as I am to appear before thee, to approach unto thee, to sue to thee for mercy? How bold am I to look up unto thee with these adulterous eyes, that have so long been gazing on the ~~earthly~~ joys? how much

presuming on thy mercy, to implore thee with that tongue, that hath so much provoked thy displeasure? how impudent to offer that disloyal heart unto thee, that hath so fast been wedded to this sinful world?

Lord, when mine own wretchedness had brought thy gracious visitation on me, when thy hand pressed me sore, when thine arrows stuck fast in me, and the venom of them drank up my spirits; when my heart was in heaviness, and my soul in bitterness, when my life was drawing near unto the grave, when mine own conscience pleaded powerfully against me, and the terrors of a second death were ready to devour me; I then earnestly implored thee for mercy, thou freely forgavest me; I then begged my life of thee, that I might thankfully devote the remnant of my life unto thee.

Ah Lord, how wretchedly hath mine own heart deceived me: what serious vows, and faithful promises did I then make unto thee? and yet, how carelessly, how foolishly am I departed from thee; how vainly have I traded out that precious time which thou hast given me? how justly mayest thou now deprive me of this wretched life, by which I have so much dishonored thee.

And now, Lord, when I have even wearied out myself in wickedness, when my soul is overcharged

with sin, and my heart with sorrow; when the vanity of this life is ready to forsake me, and there is nothing left but misery and shame to seize upon me; I have not yet resolved seriously to come unto thee.

Lord, leave me not unto the weakness of mine own infirmities, expose me not unto the raging billows of these strong temptations, suffer me not to sink into this depth of sin, to be destroyed by this dreadful storm of Satan, and mine own accusing conscience; rebuke these winds and waves, and cause a blessed calm within me; reach out thy hand of mercy, and support me; strengthen my drooping soul, that I may joyfully, and faithfully lay hold upon thee: give me a fixed heart, that I may seriously return unto thee, and may this hour be graciously accepted of thee.

Lord wean me from the false embraces of this evil world, turn all these sinful joys to bitterness unto me, make me to see their foulness and deformity, their emptiness and vanity, their shortness and uncertainty, their falsehood and flattery, their weariness and misery.

O let my heart be filled, let my soul be ravished with those transcendent joys of thine which are for ever; give me a joyful soul to rest securely in them, a ready heart devoutly thankful for them.

Lord; moderate my desires to outward enjoyments; let me relish no sweetness but in thy love, no goodness but in thy grace, no comfort but in the full assurance of thy glory.

Forgive those wretched hours which have been stolen from thy service: O Lord, my God, I heartily bewail them, and willingly resolve to spend my days in sorrow for them.

Make me more watchful over my corrupt heart; more careful of my precious time, more serious in the weighty work of my salvation; more sorrowful for sin, more mindful of the hour of death and day of judgment: that so I may affect the pleasures of this life soberly, enjoy them sparingly, and leave them cheerfully.—AMEN.



CHAP. XX.

UPON THE GREAT DANGER OF DEFERRING THE
 HOUR OF REPENTANCE.

CONSIDER, O my soul, of the great danger of delaying thy repentance; of judging that so easy, which will prove so difficult; of thinking that almost finished, which is scarce yet begun; believest thou it will suffice thee to have some transitory thoughts of thine amendment, to have perhaps some pinching sighs, some stings of conscience, some shews of sorrow for thy sins; to hang down thy head like a bulrush for a day, and yet afterwards to return with the dog to thy filthy vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the nasty mire of sin, while thou continuest in this course, thy hopes of amendment are extremely doubtful, of reconciliation dangerous, of repentance desperate.

If ever thou hopest to inherit heaven, let not Satan thus delude thee; look well into thine evil and corrupt heart, and thou shalt there find, that this is not the cure, but the disease of sin; that thou grieveest not for thine offence, but for thy punishment; that thou mayst yet go much farther in this supposed path of thy repentance, and still

be far short of that sincerity of heart which God requireth of thee, and yet have no part nor fellowship in Christ: thou maist with *Saul* express thy sorrow with thy tears; with those believers in the gospel, receive the word with joy; with *Demas*, shew thine inward grace by thine outward obedience, and in some sort be made partaker of the holy ghost, and have a taste of the good things of the world to come, and yet for all this, come far short of this unfeigned work of true repentance. Alas, what can it profit thee to bewail that sin which thou wilt not forego? what reward canst thou expect for that obedience which so soon fainthech? what comfort in that joy which is but temporary.

Remember how great a work thou hast in hand, how many millions of lost souls complain eternally in hell of this neglect; O look into the foulness of thy sin, and then into the trueness of thy sorrow: if thou art Gods child, thou wilt be grieved for offending so good a Father; thou wilt abhor that sin that hath so much provoked his displeasure, thou wilt most solemnly protest against it, and seriously resolve for ever to avoid it; thy sin will be ever before thee, to humble thee here, to exalt thee hereafter.

Thy degrees of sin will have thy degrees of sorrow; thy measure of pollution will require thy

measure of sanctification: as thou hast given up thy members to be servants of sin, so thou must now yield them up to be weapons of righteousness; as thou hast been drowned in pleasure, so thou must be drenched in tears; yea those tears will be thy daily food, to nourish thee in grace, to enrich thee in glory.

O how truly blessed is that soul, which hath unfeignedly resolved on this good, this great, this necessary work? that can cheerfully and joyfully express itself with holy David, and say, Lord, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long, I have roared out for very anguish and unquietness of heart. If thou hast David's sorrow (O my soul) thou shalt as assuredly have David's joy, thou shalt say with him also, Lord, I am thy child, and the son of thine handmaid, thou hast broken my bonds in sunder. Psal. 16. 16. Satan may now tempt thee, and through thy frailty and infirmity prevail against thee; but to become a customer to evil, the powers of hell cannot entice thee; a thousand worlds are not now of that value with thee, as the joyful remembrance of thy passed dangers, thy present comfort, thy future safety.

Thou hast now seen (O my soul) how absolutely necessary this great work is; think now how happy will be the performance, how full of danger

Such is my weakness, such is my feebleness by nature, that I cannot rise without thee ; that I cannot stand without thee, when I am raised by thee ; such is my strength, such is my ability by grace, that I am able to go with thee, that I am joyful to run after thee.

Lord, quicken and revive me from the death of sin, and grave of misery ; sustain my wounded conscience, with the sweetness of thy saving promises ; let thy patience and long-suffering lead me into repentance ; thy holy spirit unto perfect holiness, and endless happiness.

Lord Jesus draw me, and I shall joyfully run after thee ; my body in obedience to my soul, my soul and body in obedience to thy blessed will, more zealously, more willingly, more constantly to my lives end.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXX

UPON SERVILE FEAR, AND THE DANGER
THEREOF.

NO child can fear his Father as he ought, that is not jealous of his Father's honor, that is not feeling affected with his injuries, and zealously devoted to perpetuate his praise; and it is as equally impossible that this Father can affect that Son, whose obedience is rather enforced by power, than invited by affection.

If this be so in nature, it is much more so in grace; for thou, O Lord art now a double Father to me, thou art my Father by creation, and my Father by redemption: Lord, as thou hast doubled thy goodness towards me, I should have doubled my return of thankfulness towards thee; thy love to me is absolute, no breach can dissolve it, no time determine it; thy love to me was from the beginning, and whom thou lovest to the end: My love to thee is fickle, false, and full of imperfections; and if my filial fear, even in my best performances, be full of spots and blemishes in thy sight, how most deformed shall I appear, when I serve thee with an irreligious, and ungodly

fear? when I do thy will repiningly, and coldly, not for love of thy mercy, but for fear of thy justice; when I knowingly, and willingly, consenting to thy great dishonor; when I so zealous in the world's cause, yea, too often, in the devil's cause, and so benumbed in thine; when sorrows dismay me, and sins delight me.

Ah Lord! how far am I from what I ought to be? If I go on in this path, I perish everlastingly; while I continue in this course of disobedience, I hang over hell fire by the slender twig of an uncertain life, and if that once break, my loss is irrecoverable: Thou Lord hast said it, (and thy word is truth) he which denieth me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven. Lord, let this teach me to delight in thy service, to be jealous of thine honor, to thirst for thy favour, to tremble at thy frown, to submit to thy rod, to think nothing too dear to part withal, to purchase thy grace to promote thy glory. Thou, O Lord, lovest not a cowardly christian; if I prefer any thing to thy love, I am most unworthy of it; that friendship is too dearly bought, which cannot be enjoyed without the loss of thy favour.

If my brother offend me, I will labour to restore him with the spirit of meekness, lest whilst I study to rebuke another, I become guilty of myself: No sin shall pass me without some shew of distaste,

without some feeling of my Maker's injury, and my Brother's misery; if I be not moved with compassion for another's sin, I shall never be moved with contrition for mine own; such comfort as I can willingly afford another, I may well hope shall be graciously conferred on myself.

In my reproof of sin, I will observe these holy cautions, lest while I endeavour to become serviceable unto thee, I prove injurious unto my neighbour: private sins shall not have public reprehensions: neither shall public sins be undecently reproofed by me a private person; piety must not confound charity, nor religion policy. Lord, I may easily transgress, even in my best intentions; how grievously have I then failed in my rebellious actions? when I have not feared thee with that sincerity of heart which becometh thy child; when I have not loved thee for that beauty, for that richness, for that goodness which thou art, but for those outward blessings which I enjoy from thee; when I serve thee for base, and by respects, such, and so unbecoming my profession, so far below that soul which thou hast given me, that thou mayest justly now withhold thy blessings from me; when I have hitherto sought but myself in thee, when my thoughts have been carnal, my words hypocritical, my service deceitful.

To thy glory, Lord, and mine own deserved shame, I will confess, that I have not only sinned through the frailty of my nature, but I have sinned also with an high hand; sin hath not only surprised me, at unawares, but I have obeyed it in the lusts thereof, with willingness, with greediness, with joyfulness; I have not only corrupted mine own ways before thee, by mine own sins, but I have also foolishly contracted other faults, by bearing and seeing thee my God dishonored in vain and sinful discourse, in more vain and sinful excess, without shew of dislike, without thought of reproof, yea, Lord, I have added unto others sins by mine example, while I have feared to reprove that which I have known to be distasteful unto thee, while I have seemed to love that which hath been hateful to mine own soul: with those time-pleasing rules in the gospel, I have believed in thee, but because of the Pharisees (because of outward respects) I have feared to confess thee; and have loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.

BUT thou, Lord, who art infinitely good and ever ready to forgive, whose wise and over ruling providence is only able to produce the greatest good out of the greatest evil, pardon and pass by my many and my weak compliances of sinful nature; supply my defects, accept my desires, encourage my endeavours: let thy power be magnified in my weak-

ness, thy love in my wilfulness, thy grace in my sinfulness.

Suffer me not (O Lord) to run from thee, by a base and servile fear of thy justice; O let me rather run into the bosom of thy love by a filial fear, in sweet and safe assurance of thy mercy.

Lord, make me to see the fearfulness and ugliness of sin, by the bright rays of thy celestial beauty: O let me patiently, and joyfully, and thankfully, endure thy sweet chastisements for it, and speedily and constantly withdraw my longings from it.

Give me a yearning and relenting soul, for grieving thy good spirit: give me, (O Lord) that chaste and blessed fear belonging only to thy children, that I may not fear thee to tremble at thee, but to love thee, honor thee, to delight in thee, to enjoy thee.

Lord, make me jealous of every deed, of every word, of every thought that may displease thee, and truly penitent for all those sins by which I have so much dishonored thee: endue me with a loyal heart to love thee truly as I ought; strengthen this love with holy confidence, and happy perseverance, that may for ever banish this unholy fear; that so my joyful soul may live above the reach of human misery; that I may be capable of no fear,

but of offending thee; and that I may not only fear thee myself, but be jealous also of thy fear in others.

Lord, let nothing in this life withdraw me from a zealous and a constant love to thy service; from a faithful and devout endeavour to promote thy glory; that so I may be ever found truly obedient unto thee, my God; religiously acquainted with the affairs of this life; piously affected to the good of mine own soul.



CHAP. XXII.

UPON THE GREAT NEGLECT OF RECKONING
DAILY WITH OUR CONSCIENCES, AND
THE BENEFITS LOST THEREBY.

CONSIDER, O my soul, how venomous the nature of sin is; if thou canst afford to sleep in small sins, thou wilt not stick to welcome greater. Sin is of an encroaching nature; if thou suffer it to sleep in thy bosom, it will expect to dwell there. Little sins are harbingers to bigger ones; if thou lodgest these, those will challenge entertainment: let each evening therefore take a strict account of that day's action, and where thou findest thyself failing, pray heartily for pardon.

In thine entrance upon this holy course, thou wilt surely find three potent oppositions. Satan will tell thee, that God requireth no such strictness at thy hands: the world will tell thee, thou hast this or that employment to consider of: thine own corruption will persuade thee, that nature will abhor this discontented course? that thy spirits will be too much dulled, and thy life will prove uncomfortable.

Alas my soul! these are delusions to betray thee to a greater mischief. As there are degrees of sanctification, so there are of pollution; no man becometh evil in an instant! from-hence it is, that sometime the soul can start even at the very thought of that sin, which by degrees it can digest without disturbance. If holy *David* had accounted with his conscience, after his lustful looks on *Bathsheba*, doubtless those fearful sins of his, had never been committed. O, let not any vain pretences deter thee from this task, but the blessed benefits allure thee; if the entrance be harsh, the progress will be safe, the continuance sweet, the end happy.

By this enquiry, thou shalt see thy sins (those great disturbers of thy peace,) arraigned, convicted, condemned, and by the mercy of thy Saviour daily dying in thee; satan repulsed, the gifts and graces of God's holy spirit strengthened, thy mourning comforted, thine infirmities sustained, thy conscience quieted, thy rejoicings exalted, the holy angels delighted, and thy heavenly Father well pleased. O how truly blessed are these enjoyments! what soul can be now sad in this enquiry?

Lord, I now solemnly resolve upon this safe, this sweet, this blessed task; I willingly abandon all excuses that may hinder me, and joyfully embrace those happy duties which invite me nearer to thy heavenly presence; thy yoke is easy, and thy bur-

den light, when thy grace hath redeemed me from the bondage of sin, and restored me into the glorious liberty of thy children; I shall then find (to my soul's comfort) that thy service is perfect freedom; from sin, from shame, from death, from hell; from all miseries here, from all torments hereafter.

Be wary therefore, O my soul, and careful to remove all lets that may disable thee, but those especially that turn me from a christian to a beast. Satan hath many ways to cozen me; when he cannot beguile my judgment, he will betray mine affections, and lead thee by a seeming good, in friendly society, to a real evil in excess; and so when he cannot corrupt my intentions, he will undoubtedly divert mine actions, as well knowing it is impossible for him to be devout, who is not temperate.

Lord, by how much Satan is more powerful and malicious, by so much make me more wise and circumspect, that my intentions may be good, my words gracious, my actions virtuous, my life holy, my death happy.

Blessed God,

HOW large a portion of my little time have I bestowed on sin? how eager have I been of it? how negligent in asking pardon for it?

Lord pardon my unmindfulness of holy duties; make me more watchful for the time to come, that I may constantly resolve upon amendment of my evil ways, and willingly endure thy fatherly afflictions for them.

Forgive those sinful hours that have unfitted me for thy service; suffer me not, O Lord, to wander in the ways of wickedness, and when at any time the frailty of my wretched flesh shall tempt me to exceed those blessed bounds which thou hast set me, O let thy saving grace restrain me; let not this simple freedom captivate my precious soul, to thy dishonor, and mine own deserved shame; but let thy gliding spirit be my joyful comfort, to refresh me in life, and protect me in death.

Make me more zealous, more intent upon the ways of godliness; Lord suffer not my pious resolutions to abate with any outward obstacles; let me not lean upon these broken reeds, but rest on thee, the rock of my defence and safety.

Make me content to leave these earthly vanities for thy sake, who were willing to forego thy heavenly throne for mine; though frailty of my nature hath too often led me into the bondage of sin, yet let the freedom of thy grace now guide me into the footsteps of sorrow, that this blessed sorrow may be turned into joy, and that this joy the world may not take from me.

Lord open mine eyes, that I may see the blessedness of goodness, the perfect freedom of the service, the glorious liberty of thy children ; so shall I willingly submit to thy commands, and joyfully partake of thy rewards.

Blessed God, with humbleness of soul, I offer up myself unto thee ; Lord Jesus accept of me, and so assist me with thy grace, that I may wholly dedicate myself to thy glory.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXIII.

UPON UNCHRISTIAN-LIKE DULNESS IN
AFFLICTION.

LORD,

I CANNOT live without crosses, unless I can live without sin; when they come, therefore I will bid them welcome for thy sake, from whom they are sent; not one of them can afflict me without thy leave, who hast directed their course, limited their power; let me not repine at that which I have justly deserved; let me rather rejoice, that thou vouchafest me this favor; if I was not thy child, I should not be under thy rod; if thou Lord didst not love me, thou wouldst not scourge me; no outward thing can so well assure me of thy favor, as the fellowship of thy sufferings; for if I suffer with thee, I shall assuredly be glorified together with thee.

Holy *David* was in trouble, and it was good for him: O let not that which was good for him, be evil for me. Lord, if thy physic be bitter, yet it is wholesome; if it make me heart-sick now, it will make me healthful hereafter; if I disturb it not by mine impatience, it will work in me the quiet, and the happy fruits of true repentance, and amendment

of mine evil ways; it will remember me that I am a stranger, and a pilgrim here, that there is nothing in this life but weariness and sorrow, it will drive me from the penury of sin, and tyranny of Satan, to the riches of grace, and liberty of goodness; it will encourage me to walk worthy of the richness of my calling in Christ Jesus; it will make me willing to go home to thee my heavenly Father, where I shall feel no more pain, find no more sorrow, suffer no more affliction, where thou, Lord, wilt wipe away all tears from mine eyes, all grief from my heart.

Thou (O Lord) alone knowest my disease, and canst best temper my potion; each degree must be answered; so much sinful pleasure as I enjoy, so much sorrow must I drink; (and woe be unto me for ever, if I drink it not) if I taste not of this cup here, I shall drink of the very dregs in hell: thou, O Lord, who hast freely forgiven me my sins, hast not fully remitted my punishments; thou who didst undergo the misery of life, and the bitterness of death for me, hast neither bought of the one, nor taken off the other from me; by thy sufferings I am fully and for ever freed from the guilt and torments of sin; by mine own corruptions I am liable unto the act of sin, and so even unto death also as a temporal punishment for sin: thou camest not, O

Lord, wholly to abolish sin in me, but to become righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption unto me; not to abate my sorrows, but to uphold my sufferings, that I being thereby made conformable unto thee in grace, may hereafter be partaker with thee of thy heavenly glory.

How fearful ought this to make me, to commit sin? how careful to avoid occasions of allurements to it? how thankful, how joyful, to receive God's fatherly chastisements for it? I may here see, and joyfully admire the wisdom, justice, goodness, and mercy, of my heavenly Father; his justice in punishing sin; his wisdom in the proportion and end of this punishment; his goodness, by sustaining me under it, by redeeming me from it; his mercy, by making it to work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Lord, he that can droop under thy cross, shall never follow thee to thy crown; when I once find the lightness of this load, by the strength of thy supporting grace, I shall then feel to my soul's exceeding comfort, that one sin is of more weight than an age of sorrow.

And now Lord, I am joyfully prepared for the worst of afflictions, which either sin or satan, life or death can bring upon me; scourge me, launce me, bruise me, break me, do what thou wilt with

me here, so thou spare me for ever; Lord, although thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee, for I know assuredly, that all these outward things shall work together for the best for me; and that my present sufferings thou hast sent in mercy to me, to humble me for sin, to preserve me from shame; I kiss them, I embrace them, and am sincerely thankful for them. Lord, let me clearly see for what sin thou hast inflicted this punishment, that I may bewail it, abhor it, forsake it, implore thy pardon for it; when I am thus armed, I shall be able to encounter my fiercest affliction; if I am found naked, the weakest will foil me.

TO thee, O Lord, whose wise and over-ruling hand disposeth all occurrences of life, and sweetly guides them to the good of thy children, do I address my sinful soul, for mercy and protection.

Lord open mine eyes, that I may see and believe the constancy of thy love, in the mutability of mine outward condition.

Give me a patient and a willing heart to welcome all the changes of this present life, to be humble under them, to rejoice in them, and to be thankful for them.

Forgive the pride of heart and the prodigality of hand, attending on my prosperous estate; my great repinings, and ungodly passions, incident to my declining happinels, and increasing misery.

As thou hast weaned me from the pleasures of this life, by the rod of thine afflictions; so wean me also from the sins of this life, by the staff of thy consolations; that so my heart may be wholly taken off from all earthly enjoyments; that I may become even as a weaned child, to forego willingly what thou deniest me, to receive quietly what thou providest for me.

What I want of these outward blessings, supply unto me by thy inward comforts, which are infinitely better for me, and shall be therefore ever dearer to me. Lord furnish me with graces suitable to all events, and able to encourage me in all afflictions.

Lord sanctify this present sorrow to my sinful soul; so sweeten it by thy grace, that it may bring forth in me the quiet, and the happy fruits of righteousness: make it a sure pledge of thy fatherly affections towards me; let it daily and hourly draw me nearer to thy presence; let it wean me from the miseries of sin, and at last bring me to the sweet fruition of eternity.—AMEN.

CHAP. XXIV.



unthankfulness
 UPON ~~UNCHARITABLENESS~~ IN CHRISTIANITY,
 WITH ENCOURAGEMENTS TO AVOID IT.

AH Lord, from whence is my unthankfulness, my dulness in my christian calling; how much below that glorious hope which thou hast given me? when I consider of the richness of thy love in Christ, I find them to be all in all unto me, and may well wonder at mine own unthankfulness, and ignorance, that is still doating on this world's nothing and uncertainty. Thou (O Lord) art truly and eternally good, and therefore able to derive eternity of happiness. Before I was created, I was thine, and when I was not mine own, thou becamest mine; thou (O my Saviour) who hast given me thyself, canst deny me nothing: what is too good, too great, too glorious for that soul which thou hast redeemed at so dear a rate, as the price of thine own blood, and espoused to thine bosom? Thy creatures are at peace with me, thy holy angels attend me, guard me, fight for me, rejoice at my conversion; thy saints triumphant pray for me, the devils fly from me, and thou, O Lord, by thine almighty power and gracious providence, art ever with me; thou carest for me from the cradle to the tomb, thou art about my bed, and about my paths,

and spiest out all my ways; yea, thy mercy embraceth me on every side; when I sleep I am safe, when I awake joyful; in prosperity I have thy rod to afflict me, in adversity thy staff to comfort me; Lord, while I am in thy favor, I can look no way but to happiness, if I walk not answerable to it, I may well fear to be deprived of it.

And doubtless (O my soul) those eyes which look so graciously upon thee in this life, will behold thee with a more earnest, with a more endeared love in that to come; these transitory glances are but the faithful pledges of those future embraces. Those arms of mercy which now support thee in thine often failings, shall then encompass thee with glory; those blessed hands which now chastise thee for thy rebellions, will then wipe away all tears from thine eyes; and that relenting heart, which sometimes is most unwillingly withdrawn from thee for thy apostasy, will then unite itself to thine for ever.

Lord, who can be a christian and be sad? who can believe all this, and not triumph in joyful exaltation? and not insult over the sorrows of this life? and not condemn the joys of this bewitching world? and not resist these cloudy discontented thoughts, these close assaults, of satan's never-resting malice? Millions of worlds, miriads of angels, cannot restore that cursed spirit to this happiness

which thou now enjoyest, and yet so slightly regardest.

O let this teach thee to abhor his foul temptations, to consider of thy worth in Christ, and to raise thyself above the reach of earthly misery; to love thy God faithfully, to serve him cheerfully, to persevere joyfully, to be patient in tribulation, to rejoice in hope, to pray continually, to thirst after the sweetness of his grace, and earnestly to long for the consummation of his glory.

BLESSED GOD,

HOW unworthy am I to be called thy servant, who have so long been subject to the world's commands? how undeserving of thy glorious liberty of thy sons; who have so willingly been fettered by mine own corruptions? how incapable of thy heavenly comforts, that can rejoice in nothing but these earthly vanities.

Lord open mine eyes, that I may see the richness of the price of my high calling in Christ Jesus, and endeavour to walk worthy of it; that I may earnestly desire thee, joyfully embrace thee, and constantly and cheerfully devote my service to thee.

Forgive my drowsiness, my dulness, my backwardness to holy duties; awake my sinful soul from sensuality, and raise it to the blessed thoughts of sweet eternity.

Compassionate my weakness, accept my willingness, forgive my sinfulness, quicken my dulness, correct my untowardness: Lord bring me to such a blessed frame of heart, that I may willingly forego the sins and miseries of this life, and frequently delight myself with contemplations of thy joys in that to come.



CHAP. XXV.

UPON MAN'S SINFUL FRAILTY IN THE HOUR OF
 TEMPTATION, WITH MOTIVES TO
 MAKE RESISTANCE.

I AM now in the list with satan, and this hour to fight the Lord's battle: God seeth me, and his holy angels see me, I have long professed myself to be Christ's soldier, and he hath now brought me to the field to prove me; now is the trial of my courage, of my christianity; if I overcome, I shall rejoice on earth, triumph in heaven.

If that evil one were as powerful as malicious, I had just cause to fear him; but now my comfort and assurance is, that he cannot hurt me, but by me; he now strongly labours to encline my will) and woe to me, if he might compel it,) his subtle suggestions, his unclean sollicitations, his fulminated motions may be the father begetting, but mine own corrupt heart is the mother conceiving; there can be no danger from abroad, if there be no treason at home.

Look well into thyself therefore O my soul, ascend the watch-tower of thine understanding, and see that there lurk therein no seeming shews, no

specious pretences, no gross lies, no false pro
to betray thee: if thy head be surprised, thy
cannot long hold out.

Examine thine affections, try them by the
rule of divine precepts, if they be not sharply
rected, they will soon be corrupted; end
to resist the very first motions to sin; for if
can beguile thine affections, he will undou
command thine actions.

Quicken thy memory by the momentary
sure of sin, by the heavy judgments threate
gainst it, by the sad consequence of it, by the
nity of torments after it; think how often
hast been already foiled; how many serious
and faithful promises thou hast already made
of thine amendment; how carelessly thou ha
pened with them all, and how presumpt
persisted in thy follies. O think how gra
thy God hath been unto thee in forbearing
wonderful his mercy is in pardoning, how
he might now destroy thee, even in the very
finning.

Lord, if none of all this, will yet scare me
sinning against thee, nor allure me to repe
that I may draw nearer home unto thee: O
yet consider, who it is that leadeth me to fight
wherefore I have engaged. Thou, O my

Saviour, art my captain, and heaven is my country; shall I now lose those rivers of eternal pleasure, for this short, this false, and momentary joy? shall I run from thee who art the Prince of Peace, and who hast spilt thy precious blood for me, unto that cruel enemy of mankind, who hath drawn so much blood from me? shall I forsake thee who hast laid down thy life for me, and enslave myself to him, who every minute seeketh to devour me? shall I dishonor thee my God, grieve thine holy angels, shame my profession, wound mine own conscience, terrify mine own soul, seek mine own ruin? if I consent to this temptation, that God whom I dishonor will abhor me, those blessed angels whom I grieve will forsake me, those cursed spirits whom I obey will deride me, that conscience which I now wound will accuse me, that glorious Gospel which I shame will condemn me, and that ruin which I now seek will for ever seize upon me.

Let this move thee (O my soul) as thou expectest happiness, to take up a blessed resolution of resistance: if the assault dismay thee, let the conquest encourage thee; if the beginning be sharp, the close will be sweet; if nature be dejected, grace will be strengthened; and as grace increaseth here, so shall glory hereafter.

Consider last of all what Saint *James* saith, and fix in thy thoughts as chief of all, blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him, Jam.

1. 12. Thrice happy is that soul which is faithful in God's service, although it may often faint, it shall never fail; it may sometimes be foiled, but shall never be overcome; it shall never fall totally, it can never fall finally; for thou, Lord, upholdest it, and in thy love it is sure of safety here, of triumph hereafter.

Blessed God,

WITH grief of heart I willingly confess, that I have shamefully dishonored thy great and glorious name, by mine often failings, by my many faintings, and more wretched yieldings, to the shame of my profession, the grief of thy good spirit, and the terror of my frail condition.

Lord, how wretched is my soul without thee? and yet how easily, how willingly am I enticed from thee? even at this instant I am ready to forsake thee, and may most justly fear to be forsaken of thee.

The world allureth me, the flesh besotteth me, the devil beguileth me, and mine own false heart deceiveth me, and is now ready to rebel against me:

O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?
 Lord Jesus assist me, and let thy saving-grace be
 now and ever more sufficient for me.

Lord rebuke these evil thoughts, believe my
 misery, support my weakness, strengthen my wil-
 lingsness, give me an undaunted courage in thy ser-
 vice, an unfeigned sorrow for my former failings,
 and constancy of heart against present suggestions,
 and future temptations, that I may find no sweet-
 ness but in thy love, no pleasure but in thy ser-
 vice, no profit but in thy rewards.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXVI.

UPON THE INFIRMITIES OF THE SAINTS.

LORD,

WITH grief of heart I confess, that I find a law in my members, rebelling against the law of my mind, and leading me captive to the law of sin, so that those things which I would do, I cannot, and I daily and hourly do those things which I would not; yet my comfort is, that I make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof: *by the weakness* of mine own corruptions, I often fall into sin, but by the blessed assistance of thy grace I abhor to lie there; sin oftentimes surpriseth me, but by thy rich mercy *shall not* ~~hath never yet~~ reigned over me; it hath ~~often deceived~~ me, but I trust shall never destroy me. *It* hath pleased thee, O my blessed Saviour, to conclude all things under sin, that thy grace may abound, while I strive against it, and am afflicted for it, my sinful desires will (I trust) be graciously accepted, and, (in thy perfect obedience) gloriously rewarded.

Be not dismayed therefore, O my soul, that thou sometimes art ravished with the apprehension of thy heavenly joys, and suddenly relapsed to the follies of a wretched heart; the one thou happily

enjoyest, by the sweet assistance of the heavenly spirit; the other thou violently sufferest by the strong torrent of my sinful nature. Lord, such is thy great wisdom, and inconceivable goodness towards me, that oftentimes thou leavest me unto myself, and therefore sufferest me to fall, (and that most grievously sometimes) that I may see mine own infirmities, and be truly humbled for them; that I may impute nothing to mine own merits; but give all the glory to thy sufferings; that I may go out of myself, and mine own misery, into the sweet enjoyment of thy rich, and endless mercy.

Consider therefore, O my soul, that so long as thou continuest in this valley of tears, thou canst not live without this burden of sin; so long as thou carriest this frail body about thee, continuing weakness will be attending on thee. O let this teach thee to bewail the misery of this frail life, which is only prone to evil, and that continually; let it humble thee for thy many failings, and invite thee to a more hearty and sincere affection to thy Saviour, by whose absolute and perfect obedience, all thine imperfections shall be done away; and lastly, to a more earnest longing for thy bodies dissolution.

Comfort thyself in this, that all the miseries of this life shall work together for the best to thine advantage, nothing can befall thee without his holy

providence that so dearly loveth thee, even thy very sins shall further thee to heaven; if thou hast now fallen, through the infirmity of thy corrupt nature, God will raise thee, by this fall of thine, to more perfection in goodness, to more vigilance, to more holiness, to more courage, to more constancy in thy christian calling; for, the Lord ordereth a good man's goings, and maketh his way acceptable unto him, though he fall he shall not be cast away, for the Lord upholdeth him, Psal. 37. 23, 24. and if that evil one be powerfully malicious, the greater shall thy joy and triumph be, when thou art happily victorious.

Lord, how truly blessed is the condition of thy saints? who compellest even the rage of earth and hell to work for their advantage: why art thou then so sad, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? still trust in God for he is the help of thy countenance, and thy God, Psal. 42. 15.

Lord, how sad is my condition without thee! thou (who alone knowest the secrets of all hearts) knowest that I love thee, that I long for thee, that I desire nothing in comparison of thee my God, and yet thou findest nothing but pollution in me: sometimes I beg to be at union with thee, and sometimes live as if I cared not for mercy from thee; still I sin, and still thou forgiveest; yea, I am therefore the more ready to rebel against thee, because

thou, Lord, art most ready to be merciful unto me; and yet for all this (such are thy bowels of compassion towards me) thou bemoanest mine iniquity, thou invitest, thou compellest me to mercy.

Lord, wilt thou still suffer me to abuse thy goodness? I have often run from thee, by relapsing unto grievous sins, and thou, O Lord, as often hast received me to favor, and afforded me the sweet refreshings of thy holy spirit; I confess myself unworthy to enjoy that blessed spirit which I have so often grieved: O let this teach me to be truly and sincerely thankful unto thee, to love thee more heartily, praise thee more joyfully, serve thee more faithfully to my lives end.

FOR thou, O blessed Lord, art all in all unto me, thou art strength in my weakness, love in my wilfulness, life in my sinfulness; thou alone knowest under what great evils of sin, under what sad pressures of sorrow I daily groan, and thou hast promised to ease those weary souls, that cry to thee for succour and relief.

Lord save me, or I perish; Lord ease me of this heavy burden, that I sink not to eternal misery; give me thy saving grace, to guide me from these woeful ways of wickedness; O let this hour put an end to this sin: Lord, lead me unto thy paths, and uphold me there, that my feet slip not; suffer

me not to feed upon these empty husks ; O satisfy me with thy mercy, and that soon, before I go hence, and be no more seen.

My spirit is willing (O Lord) but my flesh is weak ; have pity upon me, have pity upon me, for I am in misery.


Lord cover my sins, Lord pardon mine infirmities, Lord Jesus accept of me, and interpose thy blessed merits for me.

Lord raise me from this wretched fall ; support my weakness, renew my repentance, increase my faith, quicken my zeal, that so by thy gracious assistance, I may be raised to more purity, to more perfection, in my Christian calling ; that where sin hath abounded, there grace may abound much more, to thy great glory, and mine own endless comfort.

O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord consider and do it, defer not for thine own sake, O my God.
AMEN.

CHAP. XXVII.

UPON DESERTION.


WHILE I am in this pilgrimage of sin, I cannot be without this portion of sorrow; why complain I of that which I have so justly deserved? How often hath my God afforded me the gracious gifts of this blessed spirit; and yet how easily have I regarded them? Lord, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies, much less of this invaluable favor, to enjoy the kisses of thy sacred mouth: as I am now grieved for the loss of thy presence, so I have too often grieved thee by mine own rebellious absence; this is the sad condition even of the best of thy saints in this life; as they have had their aberrations from grace, so they have had their fluctuations in woe; these sad departings of thy blessed spirit have ever been the just memorials of their presents griefs, and former miseries.

I see thy holy servant David sadly bemoaning this great loss, and almost despairing of the enjoyment of thy gracious presence, I hear him crying out in bitterness of soul; will the Lord absent himself for ever, and will he shew no more favor? is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he shut up his tender mercy in displeasure? Psal. 77. 7, 8, 9.

How precious was this complaint? how gracious time alive? even in the very minute of distress, even by the very lips of the distressed, for it follows in a breath, and I said, this is my death, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most high.

Jonah's extremity was thy blessed opportunity; even when Jonah thought himself in most danger of perishing, he then found thy mercy most ready in relieving; when he thought himself cast out of thy sight, even then he found himself looking to thy presence, and ready to be received into thy favor, Jonah 2. 4.

Lord, if thou givest me but the least measure of true faith, I shall be able to remove the great mountains of sin, and know assuredly to my soul exceeding comfort, that thou hidest thy face from me but for a moment in this life, that thou mayest gather me to everlasting kindness in that to come.

Comfort thyself in this therefore (O my soul) that God will never leave thee, that he will not forsake thee, that he will never leave thee nor forsake thee finally; that he hath not withdrawn his gracious presence from thee, but present comfort of his grace from working in thee, as there are sad desertions, so there will undoubtedly be gracious visits; thou mayest be forsaken

sin, in the suffering of punishment for sin, in the severity of that punishment, in the fearful apprehension of God's wrath in this severity; but assure thyself, (O my soul) thou shalt never be forsaken in the final execution of this wrath, in the eternal duration of this final execution.

Lord, if my hopes of heaven were grounded on the weak foundation of mine own abilities, if mine election was but temporary, I might justly fear this desertion would prove eternal; but now my comfort is, that Christ is my strong rock, on whom I am safely built; that nothing can separate me from his love; that his decree of mine election is particular, sweet, sure, and eternal; that the happy means appointed to this blessed end, is faith, holiness, righteousness and sanctification; holiness to obey the precepts, faith to embrace thy promises, righteousness to enjoy thy saints, and sanctification to possess myself: thy blessed decree (O Lord) is so far from giving me liberty to commit sin, that it most undoubtedly restrains me from it; if I cannot make my calling and election sure, by thy decreed means of sanctification, I shall never make my comfort sure by my vain hopes of glorification.

If I look upon *Noah*, *Lot*, *David*, *Jacob*, *Jonah*, *Christ* himself, I shall there see the several and the sorrowful degrees of this desertion: *Noah* and

Lot fearfully sinning, *David* a long time resting in sin, and wholly deprived of God's gracious presence for sin; *Jonah* even doubting of God's favor, in the suddenness and the sharpness of his punishment; and thou O my blessed Saviour, affrighted with the fierceness of thy Father's wrath for sin, and for a time (as thou wert man) despairing of his gracious presence.

Be not afraid therefore, O my soul; for as thou art deserted for thy sins sake, so thou art beloved for thy Saviour's sake; though he hide himself behind the wall, (of thy corruption) yet he will graciously look through the lattice (of thine humiliation) Cant. 2. 9 Even this thy present sadness will afford thee some refreshings, some gracious glimpses of his holy spirit; and though thy heart be now disquieted within thee, thou shalt again assuredly receive the voice of joy and gladness. Lord let this teach me to abhor those sins that have deprived me of thy presence; to seek earnestly to enjoy thee; to rise early to find thee, whom my soul loveth; to settle mine affections upon thy beauty, mine actions upon thy service, that I may be guided by thy grace in this life, and encompassed with thy glory in that to come.

FOR thou, O my blessed Saviour, art infinitely dearer to me than the choicest of those earth-

ly vanities; their love is false and uncertain, but thine true and eternal; abundantly sufficient to rejoice me here, to enrich me hereafter.

O Lord my God, my soul length for thee: I am weary of the sins and miseries of this life, and nothing can relieve me but thy blessed presence: O make thy face to shine upon me, and save me for thy mercy sake.

My God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from the words of my complaint? O satisfy my longings, for thou knowest, Lord, that I love thee.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, and hide not thy face from my supplications, O hide not thyself from me, nor cast thy servant away in displeasure.

Thou hast been my succour, therefore leave me not, nor forsake me, O God of my salvation; make thy face to shine upon thy servant, and save me for thy mercies sake.

O lead me from the bondage of sin, into the blessed liberty of thy children, that I may be comforted in the sweetness of thy promises, and thou mayst be delighted in the zeal of my performances.

Give me the comfort of thy help again, and establish me with thy free spirit; O hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble, make haste and hear me.

Lord, I am defiled with sin, and disquieted with sorrow, I am daily vexed with temptations; and hourly overcome with vanity; I am wretchedly infolded in the miseries of mine own corruptions, and woefully beguiled by the devils subtilties; O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me?

Lord, I bewail my misery, and implore thy mercy; O that I was this hour at union with thee, that I might hereafter joyfully adhere unto thee, be graciously accepted of thee, and for ever gloriously exalted by thee.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXVIII.

UPON THE APPREHENSION OF SUDDEN
DANGER.

BLESSED God, I know that nothing can befall me without thy holy providence, even this present danger is by thine appointment, and what thou hast designed it unto, I know not, I enquire not : Lord give me a sweet and safe assurance that I am thine, and then do with me what thou wilt : O let me live, and I shall praise thee, and thy judgments shall help me ; but if thou hast appointed me this hour to die, O let me then go home unto thee, and be united in a safer, in a sweeter union with thee. Lord hear me, and have mercy on me, for my dear Saviour's sake, who hath given his precious life a ransom for me.

PRESERVE me, O God, for in thee have I put my trust ; forsake me not, O Lord my God, be not thou far from me.

Lord, strengthen and support my wavering faith, forgive me all my sins, and suffer not my soul to be surpris'd in my last extremity.

Haste thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation, for thy name's sake, for thy promise sake, for thy precious blood sake.

Into thy hand I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.



CHAP. XXIX.

UPON THE WEAKNESS OF FAITH, AND SINFUL-
NESS OF THOUGHTS TENDING
TO DESPAIR.

How much art thou mistaken, (O my soul) to think thyself then farthest off from God, when thou art nearest unto him; to suppose thyself then most wretched, when thou art nearest to the paths of happiness? he that never doubted, never truly believed; and he that hath least assurance in himself, will have most certainty in Christ.

Thou hast sinned, and thou art sorrowful; thou hast committed great and grievous sins, and thou abhorrest them, thou forsakest them, thou heartily desirest pardon for them; if thou hadst not a godly sorrow, thou couldst not have this godly desire, if thy sorrow was for punishment, it would cause thy death, but now it is for sin, it will lead thee to repentance; if thou grieveest not so much for the severe sentence of an incensed judge, as for the displeasure of a good and gracious Father, as thou soweest in tears, thou shalt reap in joy; nay, thou shalt have great joy even in these tears, thou shalt have much sweetness even in this sorrow; and if seed-time be sweet, how blessed will thy harvest

Be! hear what thy Saviour saith, blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; in sorrows here, in eternity of joys hereafter: who can curse, where God hath blessed? what devil can deject, where God will exalt?

Thou art grieved for offending thy gracious God, and thou implorest him for mercy; comfort thyself in this, that God is near unto all those which call upon him, yea that call upon him faithfully, Psal. 105. 18. Be not afraid therefore; for if thy faith be weak, yet it is living; if it be languishing, it will assuredly recover more strength; if there be blossoms now, there will be fruit hereafter; these happy beginnings will have gracious proceedings, blessed endings.

Consider what thy God hath promised by his holy prophet, I will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, Isa. 42. 3. Let not the smarting (therefore) of thy conscience trouble thee, remember who it is that searcheth it, I have wounded thee (saith God) and I will heal thee, I have broken thee, and I will bind thee up. Thou art therefore wounded, that thou mayest be healed; thou art therefore broken, that thou mayest be bound up: that sore which is insensible, is ever most dangerous; and that wound which smareth most, is most capable of remedy.

Blessed Lord, I now feel, to mine unspeakable comfort, that thou hast wounded me with the terrors of thy law, that thou mayest heal me with the comforts of thy gospel; that I am therefore bruised with the burden of my sins, that I may be ever eased by the merits of my Saviour's sufferings; all my imperfections are his, all his righteousness is mine, I may boldly challenge it; thou wilt not deny it, I may safely plead it, thou canst not refuse it.

Consider, yet further, O my soul, what thy blessed Saviour saith unto thee, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die, Jno. 11. 25, 26.

How canst thou doubt now (O my soul) when thy Saviour biddeth thee believe, and live? what canst thou fear, when thou hast his promise for thy safety? heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one tittle of his word shall fail.

Let not the number of thy sins affright thee, for it is his blood which cleanseth us from all iniquity,
1 John 1. 7, 9.

Let not the nature of thy sins amaze thee, for though they were red as scarlet, yet he will make them white as snow.

Let not the long continuance of them stagger thee, for, at what time soever a sinner doth rep

crease my hope, cherish my love, foment these dying sparks, by the sweet breathings of thy blessed spirit, that they may zealously break forth in a pure and fervent flame of holy affections, to thy great glory, and mine own eternal happiness.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXX.

UPON THE GREAT NEGLECT OF THE DUTY OF
PRAYER.

LORD,

X WHEN I seriously consider how manifold and great my failings are, when I think of the shortness and uncertainty of life, of the solemnity of death, of the eternity of happiness, of misery after death, and by all these of the necessity, usefulness and excellency of prayer, I may well wonder that I am ever from my knees.

My life is all sin, and had therefore need to be all sorrow; the greatness and continuance of my sins have added to the greatness and continuance of my misery, and there is none but thou (O Lord) that can relieve me; there is no coming to thee but by prayer, and no prayer powerful with thee, but that which is fervent.

This is that eye of my affection that woundeth the heart of thy compassion; this is that holy violence that taketh heaven by force, that surpriseth thy mercy, that manacles thy justice, that wrestles with thy love, and will not let thee go without a blessing: this is my strong armour to defend me,

my daily food to sustain me, my, my safe repose to refresh me, my sweet content for ever to delight me.

Blessed Lord, how wonderful is thy desire to man? how graciously dost thou provide for him? how daily art thou mindful of him? thy words instruct me, thy promises allure me, thy graces sustain me, thy sacraments strengthen me, thy visits comfort me, thy embraces ravish me; and as if all this were not yet enough to manifest thy favor towards me, so unspeakable is thy love, so earnest thy desires unto me, that thou hast even given me thyself, to be overcome by me. Lord, thou art all love, when I strive with thee for mercy, I overcome thee by thyself, how great is thy goodness, how tender are thy mercies unto man, for whose sake thou contendest even with thine own essence! Thou hast given thy Son to die for me, and in him thyself to be overcome by me.

Lord, let this teach me to renew my acquaintance often with thee, to labour, to be powerful in my prayers; to study to be humble, zealous, earnest, even importunate in my devotions; to let no sinful thoughts pass me without a sigh, no sinful action without holy contrition, no divine favors without devout and thankful acknowledgment: that soul which is truly sensible of the burden of sin, will hasten unto that heavenly help that can

give it ease; and that heart which is once truly inflamed with thy love, will readily instruct the tongue to be zealous in thy praise. Lord let me first seek mine own heart, before I presume to come before thy mercy-seat, lest if I recall it not from the vanities of this life, my very prayers become sin, and so while I expect a blessing, I deserve a curse.

Let no vain excuse, no barren pretence of this life, persuade me to intermit this holy duty, lest carelessness, and coldness in devotion, beget in me a loathing of that course, which by constant practice will become my constant comfort: Lord, make me to consider of the sweetness, of the excellency of this gift, that I may daily labour to improve it to my soul's eternal happiness; that when I often fall (as I needs must through the weakness of the flesh) thou, O Lord, in mercy mayst restore me through my blessed importunity of spirit.

WITH grief of heart (Lord) I confess that my great neglect of this holy duty, hath most justly occasioned the great abatement of thy holy spirit in me, and long withholdings of thine outward blessings from me.

Lord, give me yet an heart to serve thee, and then take from me what thou wilt: I desire nothing

without thee, for I know assuredly, that with thee I canot but enjoy all things needful for me.

O make me to bewail mine own unworthiness, my drowiness, my dulness, my carelesness, my much untowardness in thy service: create in me a clean heart (O Lord) and renew a right spirit within me, that I may praise thee with alacrity and fervency of soul; that I may be daily ravished with contemplation of eternity, and hourly satisfy my thoughts with apprehension of the sweetness of my present safety, of my future glory.

Lord, make me every day more earnest in this holy duty; O give me such affectionate desires; such holy longings, such insatiate appetites, such earnest importunities of heart for heavenly graces, that I may not only beg of thee, but even wrestle with thee for this blessing, although the sinful desires of my corrupt flesh go halting to the grave.

Be merciful unto me (O Lord) for my soul trusteth in thee, and in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities (of sins and miseries) be overpast.

Lord, hear the voice of my humble petitions when I cry unto thee, when I hold up my hands towards thy mercy seat, shew thy servant the light of thy countenance, and save me for thy mercy sake, Psal. 28. 2. Psal. 31. 18.

CHAP. XXXI.

UPON THE GREAT NEGLECT OF READING THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES.

ALAS my soul, how unbeseeming thy profession; is this thy backwardness to holy duties? how long wilt thou grovel on this element of earth? how long be cheated with these counterfeit commodities, these childish toys of outward enjoyments? what sweetness canst thou find in those things which favor of corruption? what comfort in those joys which are but vain, vexatious, toilsome, transitory? whose seeming beauties are suddenly passing, never returning: O let this move thee to delight in that which cannot pass, to remember whence thou art, and whither thou art going, that thou mayest thereby raise thy thoughts to immortality.

Look upon the beauty of those sacred leaves, and thou wilt loath the falshood of this world's embraces; thou mayest there find the sum of all that was, or is, or is to come, conducing to thy real happiness; there is nature unbowelled, hell opened, and heaven unveiled; thou mayest there see the creature to be vanity, thyself misery, thy Saviour felicity; thou hast there his counsel to guide thee,

his wisdom to instruct thee, his power to sustain thee, his gifts to encourage thee, his threatenings to admonish thee, his mercies to allure thee, his judgments to deter thee, his holy spirit to comfort thee: there is antiquity, strangeness, truth, in history, wonder in miracles, amazement in prophecy, soundness in precepts, sweetness in promises; each syllable contained in this book, is matter of eternal moment. Take heed therefore, that thou passest by no portion of this sacred volume lightly, nor pryest into any presumptuously: holy diligence is often blest with heavenly knowledge, and humble ignorance with heavenly grace.

Lord, seeing that thy word is in itself so excellently rich, and in its use so absolutely good, with what earnestness of soul ought I to embrace it? with what holy diligence peruse it? with what devout cheerfulness and constancy of heart, apply myself unto it? these high perfections shall religiously oblige me to repair my former neglects, by my present promises of my future performances.

No day shall henceforth pass me, without some time allotted for this holy exercise, custom will make it easy; profit, sweet; if the troublesome affairs of this life do sometimes (to my soul's grief) disturb me in it (by thy grace assisting) they shall never divert me from it; what is borrowed from this blessed task, by enforced necessity, shall be repayed:

with advantage by the next happy opportunity. Lord, all is but vanity and mere nothing, in comparison of thee, and thy service; if I cannot be willingly holy, I shall never be joyfully happy.

Blessed Lord,

So sanctify my sinful soul, that I may joyfully perform those promises I make unto thee, that I may daily dedicate some part and portion of my sinful hours, to read some portion of thy sacred scriptures: O let them ever be the joy of my joy, the life of my life, the light of mine eyes, and comfort of my heart.

Lord, turn away mine eyes (from these outward enjoyments) lest they behold vanity, and quicken me in thy way.

Give me an humble soul, that I may read thy blessed lines with holy fear, and awful reverence; that I may be piously delighted with them, and happily instructed by them.

Give me a discerning soul, that I may see the wonderful things of thy law, that I may truly love it and delight in it; that my heart may be enflamed by it, and my tongue to be ever talking of it.

O let thy statutes be my song in the house of my pilgrimage, that I may walk in thy ways with constancy, that I may run in thy race with fervency.

AMEN.

CHAP. XXXII.

UPON THE NEGLECT OF DIVINE MEDITATION.

WHAT doest thou here on earth, O my soul? why art thou so perplexed with the cares and sorrows of this sinful life? so careless of the joys in that to come? who can judge him likely to inherit heaven, that loves not to think of it? thou mayest measure thy degrees of grace, by thy desires of glory: if thy thoughts be not often, and earnestly taken up with this subject, thou hast just cause to suspect thy loving it, to fear thy enjoying it; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

If thou livest the life of pleasure, thou art so much worse than a beast, by how much thou oughtest by reason to be better; if of action, thou art so much nearer to happiness, as reason is beyond sense, and yet so much farther off, as grace is beyond nature; if the happy life of heavenly meditation, thou art so far above vanity, as heaven is above earth, as immortality above nature, as glory above corruption.

O how sweet are those thoughts which lead me to eternity, which raise my soul above the reach of human misery, that can support me under all the

heavy pressures of sin, under all the grievous burdens of sorrow, under all the sharp assaults of Satan; that can make me merry in life, and triumphant in death.

Nothing can more truly represent me to myself, and inform me that I am all earthly, than the dulness and backwardness of my thoughts to be heavenly: who can ever hope to be an inhabitant of that city whose language he cannot speak? Lord, when my thoughts are more zealously affected with thy heavenly joys, I shall then hope to be more frequently acquainted with thy heavenly visits; by my careless neglect of the one, I am now justly deprived of the sweet enjoyments of the other; while I am wedded to this wretched world, my thoughts must needs favor of my corruption; but if thou, Lord, wilt once open mine eyes to be the glorious beauty of my heavenly home, I shall then know, and joyfully confess, that one hour thus spent, will add more comfort to my soul, more true content to my desires, than all these outward blessings, and I shall then account, and joyfully confess with thy Apostle, that all things are but loss and dung, in comparison of the richness of thy love in Christ Jesus.

FOR thou, O blessed Saviour, art the blessed fountain of eternal happiness, the joy of my heart, the triumph of my joy, the comfort of my life, the

safety of my body, the rest of my soul; without thee I am far worse than nothing, and with thee I enjoy all things; for thou art in the Father, and I in thee, and thou in me; and in this happy union is contained that fruition, is enjoyed that for ever blessed vision, in which the souls and bodies of thy saints eternally delight themselves. O thou Sovereign of my soul's eternal comfort, how unworthy am I to enjoy thee, that have been hitherto so much unmindful of thee, how undeserving to behold thee in that glory, that am so daily guilty of thy great dishonor.

Lord raise my thoughts to immortality, and fix my soul upon the love of sweet eternity; let my chiefest joy be, ever to contemplate thee, who art my chiefest good.

Pardon those wretched hours that have been lost in search of outward happiness; O make me to redeem them, by abandoning the creature, and placing my affections wholly on the beauty of the great Creator, expatiate my sinful soul with daily meditations of my future joys, that I may love thee more fervently, fear thee more dutifully, desire thee more earnestly, long for thee more heartily embrace thee more faithfully, and think of thee more joyfully, to my life's end.—AMEN.

CHAP. XXXIII.

UPON UNCHRISTIAN LIKE DEJECTEDNESS IN
POVERTY.

WHY do I excruciate myself with apprehensions of a seeming evil? how unworthy am I of this life, which I hold from that God, whom I dare not trust? will God feed me with the delicacies of heaven, and not give me bread? will he give me full draughts of the rivers of his eternal pleasures, and not afford me temporal refreshments? shall my death be precious in his eyes, and my life uncomfortable in mine own? can there be any evil, and the Lord hath not done it? shall he do it, and shall I complain? if poverty be evil in itself, yet it is good for me; the evil of sin hath drawn upon me this evil of punishment; so this evil is from nature, and the good from grace: by this affliction I am weaned from the world, and made desirous of my heavenly home; I am now put in mind, that my treasure being there, my heart should be there also; I am now fully assured (by my patience and humility under this affliction, and by the quiet fruits of righteousness it daily bringeth forth in me) that I am God's child, that as I am now made partaker of my Saviour's sufferings, so shall I be hereafter of his glory; that I part with earthly content-

ments, to enjoy heavenly comforts. thou lendest me thy staff of consolation well able to endure thy rod of affliction. my body be worse, I shall then find much better; my present condition happy and blessed.

In what state soever I am, I will be best, because thou (Lord) hast put me calling be low. my account will be discharge this faithfully. I shall not lie. Thou O Lord, lookest not upon my ~~my~~ goodness, ~~my~~ faithfulness in thy in thy material temple was as useful as any thing in thy spiritual. it is enough not content myself with earthly and heavenly blessings, but labour to ~~and want~~ ~~by~~ inward graces; so that by becoming be turned into spiritual eternal blessedness.

Thou O Lord hast allotted my life, most agreeable to thy divine will able to my final condition: and with thought for to-morrow sufficient is the evil thereof: thou allowed me for increasing of it, thou forbidden thoughts to distract thee in it: I seek thy kingdom, and the kingdom and then I know assuredly, that all for me shall be added to me.

O thou blessed Saviour of the world, who for my sake wert willing to endure the scornful poverty of this life, to purchase my redemption, teach me by thine example, and for thy sake to undervalue all these glorious pomps of these enticing vanities, that though my body be despised by the world, my sinful soul may be accepted with thee, and both soul and body may eternally be happy where thou art.

Lord, by how much (by thy great sufferings) thou wert made the viler for me, by so much (by thy rich mercy) let thy love be ever dearer to me.

O give me graces suitable to all events; let not prosperity puff me up, nor adversity too much deject me; but for thy mercy sake, let happiness in Christ be all in all unto me; make me humble in the one, patient in the other, thankful in either, happy in both.

Grant Lord, that no ungodly care or sinful sorrow may disturb me, that I may with willingness, and thankfulness, and joyfulness of heart, contentedly rely upon thee.

Enrich my heart with with heavenly thoughts, give me that better part which cannot be taken

from me; Lord, what thou deniest me of these outward mercies, that all these earthly things may work together to the best to mine advantage, so shall my present poverty be an undoubted earnest of my future glory. Amen.



CHAP. XXXIV.

UPON SICKLESS AND UNGODLY REPINING
THEREAT.

AS every good and perfect gift is from above, so is also every punishment for sin by every proportion of sorrow; for misery cometh not out of the dust, neither doth affliction spring out of the earth, *Job. 1. 5, 6.* That divine goodness, which wisely and affectionately disposeth all things to the good of his chosen; by his holy providence hath suited their degrees, limited their powers, and appointed their ends, every pain in sickness, every pang in death, have their just number, weight and measure..

It is the Lord; let him do what he will; nothing can befall me but by his divine allowance; nothing shall dismay me, that my God inflicteth on me: If my visitation be grievous, I am sure it is safe; for he chastiseth me for my profit, that I may be partaker of his holiness.

Blessed be that sorrow which allureth me from sin, blessed be that misery which inviteth me to mercy, I kiss it, I embrace it, and with humbleness

of heart, I joyfully and patiently submit unto it:
The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh, blessed be
the name of the Lord, *Jeb. 1. 21.*

I humbly confess (Lord) that my great and
grievous sins have most justly deserved this great
and grievous affliction, that thou mightest long
since have deprived me of my life, for depriving
thee of thine honour; that I am most unworthy of
this thy gentle visitation, for I am full of rottenness
and corruption, and therefore can expect no other,
but to be filled with sorrow and affliction; thou
hast given me a body for thy service, but I have
defiled it with sin and wickedness: thou gavest me
a soul enriched with thy heavenly graces, but I
have defiled it with unthankfulness and disobe-
dience: no faculty of my soul, no member of my
body, but are most impure and sinful in thy sight.
Thou, O Lord, knowest all my frailties, and my
faults are not hid from thee: thou hast how vainly
I have mispent my precious time, how carelessly
I have despised thy precious words which thou hast given
me: how cruelly thou hast used me the creature, how
wonderfully neglected thou the great creature.

Thou hast often visited me from far, by thy
divine motions, by thy precious communications, by
thy gentle visitations, by a tender heart, and a
wonderful love, and yet I still sit, without coming,

without sorrowing, without repeating; such are my faults, so grievous mine offences; that I now blush to name those sins before thee, by which I have so often and so foolishly rebelled against thee: and now after all this, although thou hast with lasting patience waited my return, and art forced to withdraw thy present mercy, yet thou art moved to behold my present misery; even in thy very wrath thou hast compassion on me, *Habac. 3. 2.* while thou seemest (by this present sickness) to withhold thy favour from me, thou graciously intendest, by this blessed means, to shew thyself more lovingly unto me; for, I know Lord, that thy judgments are just, and that thou of very faithfulness hath caused me to be troubled, *Psal. 119. 19.* Therefore, though thou killest me, yet will I trust in thee, *Jeh. 13. 15.* Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, yet will I fear no evil, *Psal. 32. 4.* Behold, Lord, I am willingly and joyfully, and thankfully in thy hands, do with me what thou wilt, if I live, I shall praise thee, if I die, I trust, I shall go home unto thee, and be for ever blessed with thee.

O thou Father of mercies, and God of all consolations, behold me thy sick servant, with thine eyes of pity and compassion; O remember not my former sins, but have mercy upon me, O Lord,

and that soon, for I am come unto great extremity.

O Lord my God, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long; thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me possess the iniquities of my youth; O let the sweetness of thy mercy qualify the sharpness of thy fatherly correction; consider me, O Lord, that I am but dust, full of frailties and infirmities, forgive me for thy mercy's sake.

Remember not the sinful failings of my youth, but according to the richness of thy goodness, be thou mindful of me.

O righteous Father, look not on the multitude and heinousness of mine offences, but look upon the bitter passion of thy blessed Son, he was wounded for my transgressions, he was broken for mine iniquities, O by his blessed stripes let my sinful soul be healed.

Enable me to suffer this thy gentle visitation, with that meekness and contentedness of soul, that becometh thy child; and so bless it unto me, that it may bring forth in me the quiet and the happy fruit of righteousness, that it may drive my thoughts to immortality, and fix my soul upon eternity.

Blessed Lord, my hope is in thee, my soul trusteth in thee, and under the shadow of thy wings shall be my refuge, until this misery be overpast, O Lord, consider my complaint, for I am brought very low.

Let my present anguish more prevail with thee, to move thee to compassion, than my former foolishness, to stir thy wrath and indignation. O enter not into judgment with thy servant, for no flesh is righteous in thy sight.

Lord, I confess my wickedness, and am sorry for my sin; for thy name's sake, O Lord, be merciful unto my sin, for it is great; my confusion is daily before me, and the shame of my face hath covered me; my heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me: Lord, I am thine, O save me for thy mercy's sake; into thy hands I commend myself, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.

Forake me not, O Lord my God, be not thou far from me, haste thee to help me, O Lord God of my salvation, O spare me for thy mercy sake, that I may recover my strength, before I go hence, and be no more seen,——AMEN.

CHAP. XXXV.

UPON THE MISERY OF LIFE, AND BLESSED-
NESS OF DEATH.

I AM a pilgrim and a stranger here, as all my fathers were, I am wearied with travel, and long to be at rest; I am lodged here but with great cost, and greater danger; this seeming sweetness hath cost me much true sorrow, many bitter sighs, aching hearts, disturbance of body, distraction of soul; I have sought for help here below, but can find none, no creature on earth to relieve me, none to support me; I have seen pleasure to be folly, and laughter madness, men of low degree to be vanity, of high degree a lye, their understanding vain, their labours vain, their help much more vain; for who can ransom the soul of his brother, here man must let that alone for ever. My substance is a meer shadow, and my rest uneasiness; I labour for holiness, but I cannot attain it; I search for happiness, but I cannot find it; the devil beguiles me of it, the world allures me from it; yea, 'tis sad is my condition, that mine own soul is against mine own contentment. My understanding deceives me, mine affections betray me, my memory forsakes me; those things which I would do I cannot, and I daily do those things which I would

not; all that I am, all that I can be in this life, is nothing else but extreme vanity.

What shall I think of all this? and wherewith shall I comfort me? by thy mercy, Lord, I have found out one that can relieve me, thou (O my blessed Saviour) art unto me life, and by thee death is unto me advantage; while my body sleeps it shall rest, and that rest shall be truly blessed; I shall rest from labour, from sorrow, from sin; my sleep shall be safe, my vision happy; while my body sleepeth my soul shall awake, when my soul is unclothed of flesh, and flesh of beauty, my spirit shall be made ready with the robes of glory; while my dust is insensible, my spirit is intelligible; mine eyes shall be then opened, and I shall see even as I am seen, with purity and perfection of soul; no evil of nature shall obscure me, no defect of organs hinder me, no clouds of sin to molest me; mine understanding shall be clear, mine affections pure, my memory perfect; I shall there be satisfied in beholding, ravished in enjoying, blessed in retaining; nothing can be there wanting, where I enjoy all that was, that is, that is to come; where the happy humanity is eternally united to the blessed Deity, where I am Christ's, and Christ is God's. O happy condition of my sinful body, O blessed change of my immortal soul, the one is sown in corruption that it may rise to immortality; the other layeth

down corruption, to inherit glory; tho' I now leave it, I still long to enjoy it, and joy exceedingly in longing for it, because I know I shall for ever be united to it.

But who is me, even in this happiness I am still miserable. I have found out my quiet, but I care not to enjoy it; death offers me a crown, and I refuse to accept it; am I so senseless to effect mine own unhappiness? to rejoice in labour, and complain of rest? what do I here any longer? the world loves me not, nor I it: why do I thus dote upon mine enemy? when it frowns, it afflicts me, when it smiles, it betrays me; there is nothing in it but weariness and misery.

Go out therefore, O my soul, go out cheerfully from thy prison to thy palace, God is thy father, and heaven thy country; thou art here distressed, poor, and wretchedly naked, bereaved of graces, despoiled of goodness, thou hast there much treasure, and of great price, a fair mansion, and a goodly heritage; Christ hath purchased it, and is gone before to prepare it: thou longest much in this life to behold that which thou never sawest; here are great and glorious things prepared for thee, such as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither have entered into the heart of man to conceive; how earnestly shouldst thou long to see

them? how much more earnestly to enjoy them? how willing should this make thee to express thyself with holy *David*, and say, " My soul is athirst
 " for God, yea even for the living God, when
 " shall I come and appear before the presence of
 " my God?"

Alas, my soul, thou art here but groping in the dark, daily erring and mistaking, hourly stumbling and falling into sin, into shame, into sorrow; in great dangers of the miseries of life, in greater of the torments of eternal death.

All that thou knowest here, is to know thyself ignorant: thou only knowest things here by their events, thou shalt there know them in their first causes; thou art here wearied out in gaining this imperfect, lame, and empty knowledge; thou shalt there delight thyself in knowing all that is desirable, by knowing him, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; these drops of transitory joys are full of bitterness, those rivers of eternal pleasures, are derived from the fountain of eternal sweetness; thou hast here vain pomp to delight thee, thou hast there a far greater and more exceeding weight of glory to encompass thee; thou art here enthralled by the misery of life, thou art there enlarged by the blessedness of death.

Blessed Lord, all this by grace I know, and faithfully believe; and yet by nature I am still blind and ignorant, unable to discern, unwilling to desire those blessed things which are belonging to mine everlasting peace, but when thou (in thy rich mercy) shalt once open mine eyes to see the beauty of my heavenly home, I shall then entirely love it, and unfeignedly long for it; I shall then most willingly forsake these tottering walls of my frail flesh, to dwell with thee in perfect holiness and endless happiness, that frailty may be swallowed up of immortality, and immortality may be embraced by eternity.

O THOU which wert, and art to come, who hast sweetened death by thy perfect obedience, and perfumed the grave by thy blessed sufferings, suffer me not in my last hour, for any pains of death, or terrors of hell, to fall from the fast hold of a true and lively faith, in thy promises, to lose the precious hopes of immortality, and sweet enjoyments of eternity.

Lord, let me then say with thy blessed apostle, that I know whom I have trusted, that he will keep what I have delivered to him, and restore it safely unto me at that day.

Let me seriously consider of the misery of life, and blessedness of death; acquaint me every day

with the remembrance of it, and bless me every hour with a desire unto it; that I may willingly unclothe myself of sin and misery, and joyfully be cloathed with immortality.

O Lord, prepare me for that blessed hour, and in my greatest weakness and extremity, even then when all the comforts of this wretched life shall fail me, Lord Jesus forsake me not, be not thou far from me.

O give me then that inward joy, that blessed comfort of thy holy spirit, that may support and comfort me in all the terrors and amazements of this dark and unknown passage, in all the dreadful accusations of the devil, and mine own accusing conscience.

Lord, let thy blessed spirit then witness to my soul, that I am thy child, that thou wilt purge away all my dross, and take away all my sins; that I am powerfully protected by thy grace, and shall assuredly be made partakers of thy glory. -AMEN.

CHAP. XXXVI.

UPON THE GREAT NEGLECT OF OPPORTUNITIES
IN DOING GOOD UNTO THE SAINTS.

LORD,

WHEN I call to mind the richness, and the largeness of thy bounty towards me, I am much grieved at the coldness, and the carelessness of my affections towards thine; each object of charity is an opportunity of mercy; if I neglect it, I am unkind to thee my Saviour, cruel to my neighbour, injurious to mine own soul.

I am not, Lord, but steward of thine outward blessings, and it were now just with thee, to call me to a strict account: if any of thy gifts suffer, which thou sendest unto me for relief, or sufferings thou wilt surely require at me: as each cup of cold water which I have given in thy name, shall not lose its reward, so each blessing which I owe unto thee in thy manner shall surely require its everlasting recompence.

thy things

in that to come: I have had many ways to deprive myself of my present comfort, of my future happiness; when my talent hath been large, I have had no leisure; when little, no ability to works of mercy. The present necessities of thy saints have been daily neglected, upon the false pretence of future opportunities; and those future opportunities again put off by the dilatory plea of mine own present necessities: thus have I long kept myself in a circulation of self-cozenage, and have so lived here as if I were never to go hence, and were utterly ignorant for what cause I came hither.

From whence is this my great neglect of charity towards my brethren, but from my greater want of love to thee, my God, and from whence my disobedience to thy precepts, but from mine unbelief of thy promises? Thou biddest me give, and hast promised it shall be given unto me, good measure, shaken together, pressed down, and running over, *Luke 6. 38.* Thou commandest me not to be weary in well-doing, and hast promised, that in due time I shall reap, if I faint not, *Ephes. 6. 9.* If I did believe the one, I should gladly perform the other; and whose word shall I take (Lord) if I dare to question thine? All thy blessed promises are yea and amen, the beginning sweet, the end certain; as thou hast a bottle for my tears, and a bag for my

transgressions, so thou hast also a book for mine alms-deeds, *Acts* 10. 4. Not one of them shall be forgotten, but even the very least of them shall be graciously accepted, gloriously rewarded; not for my work sake, but for thy promise sake, not for mine own sake, but for my Saviour's sake; Lord, I can merit nothing at thy hands, but by thine own mercy.

And now, Lord, let me examine, what I have gained, by my want of charity. I have exchanged heaven to enjoy earth, I have parted with thee my Saviour, in whom are all the treasures that are true and eternal, for the very basest part of earth, which is vain and uncertain; I have lost those blessed opportunities of doing good, which can never be recalled, and together with them, those rewards of thine, which shall never be enjoyed. I have offended thee my God, grieved thy saints, burdened mine own conscience, and been an utter enemy to mine own salvation.

As my affections have been frozen towards others, so have I justly found the gifts and graces of thy holy spirit, decaying daily in mine own soul; my love cold to thy law, mine ears deaf to thy precepts, my mouth dumb to thy praises, my faith dead to thy promises, my hope fainting, my zeal languishing, my joy perishing. These are the

sad and sure effects of want, of charity, the beginning sinful, the progress dangerous, the end desperate.

Lord, if those heavenly spirits, whose very names import their ardency of love to thy glory, are yet found cold enough in thy sight, with what horror and confusion of face, will those wretched souls appear before thee, who have not been so much as luke-warm in thy service.

By thy grace, (Lord) I will therefore henceforth make a godly improvement of all future opportunities of doing good ; whatsoever thine allowance is unto me, of these outward blessings, I will dedicate some due proportion of it unto works of mercy ; and cheerfully, and thankfully trust thee my God with the sustentation of my body, upon whose blessed protection, I safely rely for the eternal preservation of my soul.

My heart, my hand, my tongue, mine actions, shall be always ready to relieve the necessities, to promote the good of thy children ; and as this happy resolution hath had its beginning from thy grace, so shall its aim be wholly at thy glory.

Blessed Lord,

SUCH is thy gracious goodness unto thine, that thou even preventest them with thy blessings; while they call upon thee thou art ready to answer, and before they speak unto thee thou art willing to hear.

Lord I am thy child, and am therefore bold to crave a blessing of thee, and what is now more suitable to my necessities, than the sweet infusion of thy holy spirit? for I now find (to my grief of heart) that the foreign heart of the pleasures and profits of this life have extracted from me the inward heat of my desires and longings for thy blessed presence; the adventitious heat of the love of this world hath quite consumed in me the natural heat of my zeal to thy kingdom.

Lord, kindle in me those decaying sparks of thy grace, that they may now grow up into a bright flame of fervent affections to thy glory, and thy childrens good.

Teach me to know that Godliness is great gain, and that the truest treasures are those which are laid up with thee in thy kingdom.

Lord, pardon my neglects of holy duties; forgive my deadness, and my dulness unto works of mercy; repair my sinful breaches by thy present graces: O let the fervor of my future charity become a pleasing sacrifice to expiate my former misery; to reconcile my soul (in Christ) to endless misery. — Amen. & an evidence of my grateful love to Thee for Thine unspeakable Grace!



CHAP. XXXVII.

UPON THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART IN
THE PERFORMANCE OF HOLY DUTIES.

NOTHING is more common amongst christians, than to be deluded by the shew of holy actions; the heart of man is deceitful above all things, who can know it? holy performances are usually accompanied with hellish temptation; when the ships of our souls is under fail, and hath the freshest way for heaven, we have then most need to look to our steerage, to have an eye to the compass and land-marks.

Which of our holy duties (which are the ships we sail in to the ports of happiness) have not their rocks to split upon, or remora's to hinder them, or cross winds to divert them, or leaks to sink them, or seas to overwhelm them; when we arrive at any small measure of goodness, we many times rest in it, and grow secure upon it: if grace carry us on farther, we are too apt to believe, that we are far better than our neighbours, that we are highly in God's favor, and cannot but deserve his fatherly protection, his liberal remuneration; and so by this *secret* insinuation of pride in our hearts, we have

folly in our hands, sin in our minds, and shame in our actions.

That prayer is very rare, that is not sick of some distemper; that charity very pure, that can admit of no mistakes, and that performance very perfect, that is not soiled with some filth of wickedness: how willing are our thoughts to wander in our prayers? how cold and careless are we in them? and how remiss in the performance of them? where is that constancy, that fervency, that holy importunity of spirit that is required of us in this holy exercise? which of us can truly say, that (throughout the whole course of his whole life hitherto) he ever put up one prayer unto Almighty God, that was not cumbered with distracted thoughts, that needed not a present pardon? I tremble at mine own, and grieve at others failings. (O let my severest censures of my Brothers sins, be assured sins of my best love) How far are we, even the very best of us, from that purity and perfection of soul which becometh this holy duty; and yet how ready are we, even the very worst of us to believe ourselves sufficiently holy, assuredly happy.

We content ourselves usually with the very shells and husks, and outsidés of religion; with shews and shadows of devotion; with customary, cold prayers; intermitted, undigested readings;

careless, inconsiderate meditations; hypocritical, pharisaical fastings; popular alms-deeds, having only the shew of godliness, but denying the power thereof: all these, and whatsoever else are like to these, are odious to God, abominable to good men, and most destructive to their souls that are deluded by them.

When, by the sweet assistance of the heavenly goodness, and gentle breathings of his blessed spirit, we are drawing nearer to our heaven; when the anguish distempers of the soul are abated, and her native and radical heat is grown strong and vigorous; then the fervency of our zeal is a rich evidence of the liveliness of our faith, of the certainty of our hope, of the perfection of our charity; when our affections are inflamed with God's love, and our actions aim only at his glory; when we are grown up to that happy state of grace, that our consciences are pure, our resolutions godly, our conversations unblamable; altho' we dare not then propose these base, and by respects, these outward aims, unto ourselves, yet how cunningly and closely will corruptions steal in upon us, even in these very blessed acts of grace? This is too truly proved, too sadly experienced, even by the very best of christians: (Lord, in thy rich mercy) give us eyes to discern it, hearts to avoid it.

How often may we find pride in our humility, lust in our desires of chastity, our own private ends in our proposals of God's public interest? when we bear a part amongst the mourners of *Sion*, when we are cast down for some human frailty, we presently conceive highly of our own holiness, and very meanly of others in their relations unto happiness; while we have sought to become better, by the proposal of some strict rules, to preserve chastity, have we not many times become worse, by poisoning those desires by very unclean thoughts, and unclean actions? How many while they have sincerely aimed at God's glory, by the holy proposal and happy performance of some real good for the benefit of his children, have been secretly surprized with the bye-end of their own deserved praise; Lord, how readily have I now met with mine own sins, to thy great glory, and mine own deserved shame? I willingly confess that I am guilty of all this, and infinitely more than this; even these very lines are witnesses against me, of my secret corruptions; O let ~~this my sorrowful confession~~ ^{thy precious blood shed} purchase for thee my free and full remission, that thou mayest have the glory, I the comfort, of these weak endeavours.

AND now Lord, seeing I am thus impure, and sinful in mine own eyes, even in the very best of my performances, how loathsome must I needs ap-

pear in thy fight, who art purity itself, and canst not behold iniquity! Blessed Lord, as thou hast given me the light of thy word to discover me unto myself, so give me also the sword of thy spirit, to deliver me from myself.

Deliver me, O Lord, from the evil man, from mine own secret corruptions, and unknown abominations.

Although I am unto mine own soul both ruin and destruction; yet let my blessed Saviour be unto me safety and salvation.

Search my heart (O Lord) and try my reins; O let no base and by-respects inhabit there, to rob thee of thine honor; no false and vain respects, to cheat me of my present holiness, and future happiness.

Pardon and pass by the secret and unknown errors of my sinful life, suppress the great disturbances of my corrupt affections, although they many times prevail against me, yet let thy saving grace (Lord) be sufficient for me.

Lord, make me purely and entirely holy; let me love holiness, neither for fear of thy punishments nor for hope of thy rewards, but for thy sake only,

(O my God) who art holiness itself. Let me never think myself holy enough, but ~~forget all those holy actions which are past, and~~ press hard forward towards the mark, for the rich price of the high calling in Christ Jesus.

Lord, crown my holy desires with happy performances, and blessed perseverance, that at the end of my race I may receive the end of my hopes, the salvation of my precious soul, and that for his sake, and perfect holiness by whom I trust these weak, and sinful endeavours of mine, shall be graciously accepted, and faithfully rewarded.—AMEN.



CHAP. XXXVIII.

UPON THE UNRULINESS OF THE TONGUE, WITH
NECESSARY CAUTIONS TO RESTRAIN IT.

LORD,

THY servant *David* is said to be a man after thine own heart, and yet I find him setting a watch before his lips, that he might not offend with his tongue; if such a chosen vessel as he had so much need of circumspection, what holy cautions had I need to use, what strict rules to observe, who am so far from David's purity, that I am nothing else but wilful impiety? I am too far Lord, from being at union with thee, that I am even enmity itself against thee.

In vain had holy David set a watch before his lips, unless he had first set a guard upon his heart, where the fountain is impure the streams can never be wholesome; if the heart be full of sinful corruption, the tongue will soon overflow with corrupt and sinful communication.

Lord, I need none other proof of this point, than mine own sinful failings; how often have I provoked thee to anger, and displeasure against me,

by that usual, but most fearful sin of swearing? of which, with shame and sorrow I confess, my younger years were sadly guilty; since when, time and experience having added more light to my mind, but thou (O Lord) especially more grace to my heart, when I would have left it, to my great grief I could not; and had not that thy saving and preventing grace restrained my depraved nature, this sin had doubtless been a sad memorial to my grave: such is the power of sin once grown habitual, O let my sorrowful confession be the readers useful instruction, that thou mayest have the glory, I the shame of my mis-doing.

Lord, I have often sinned against thee, by my wretched violation of the truth, in envious detractions from the good of my neighbour, vain-glorious aggravations of mine own abilities, censorious taxations of my brethrens infirmities, indulgent diminutions of mine own iniquities.

I have often grieved thy good spirit, by which thou hast sealed me up unto the day of redemption, by my vain and idle communications, by my rash and sinful exprobrations, by my weak and froward oburgations, to the great dishonor of thee my God, to the continual grief of thy saints, to the sad disturbance of myself.

All this (to my heart's grief) have I often done, and by all this I may now plainly see, how much I have hitherto been the servant of sin and satan, how great an enemy to thy glory, and to the good of mine own soul: but now, Lord, by thine assistance, my special care shall henceforth be, to allow myself no liberty of speech, but what is aiming at eternity; if my heart be heavenly, my words will be gracious, my actions holy, mine end happy; and that all this may be so indeed (by thy grace, Lord) I will observe with carefulness, and constancy, these following cautions.

1. Before I speak, I will consider, that I am in thy blessed presence, that what is once spoken can never be recalled, but is recorded for eternity.

2. That each idle word must be accounted for, and that my whole life hitherto hath been little else but vain and empty discourse, tending much to thy dishonor, the hurt of my neighbour, and (without mercy in Christ) the destruction of my own soul.

3. That there is no truer testimony of a graceless heart, than a licentious tongue; that if I be not holy in my discourse, I can never be happy in mine actions.

4. That it is impossible for those prayers to be pleasing to God, which are offered up with that sinful member, that is so shamefully defiled with evil and corrupt communications amongst men.

5. That if I make a mock at Christianity, by having only a form of godliness in mine outward actions, but denying the power thereof in my usual conversation, God will one day pay me home, by shewing me the richness of his sufferings, but denying me the benefits thereof, and the sweet enjoyments thereby.

6. That without holiness no man shall see the Lord; and that such as is my common and most accustomed discourse in my life, I may well fear will be my last, and most unfortable expression at my death.

7. Unto all this I will add the shortness, misery, and uncertainty of a sinful life; the horror and amazement of a wretched death; the extremity and eternity of torments after death. Lord, when my heart is thus guarded by thy grace, my lips I trust will be ever open to thy praise.

Blessed God,

IF thy holy angel durst not 'give railing accusations against the devil; if thy faints in patience possess their own souls, and their speeches be seasoned with salt, administering grace to the hearts of the hearers; if thou the blessed Saviour of the world, when thou wert reviled, reviledst not again, but as a lamb before the shearers so openedst thou not thy mouth, with what comfort can I now appear before thee, with what confidence expect a blessing from thee?

With grief and sorrow I confess, that my heart hath ever been full of corruption, and naughtiness, my mouth full of cursing and bitterness, my daily discourse full of folly and uncleanness, the whole discourse of my life full of misery and wickedness.

O that my head were water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night (that I might mourn continually) for mine own and others sins.

Lord, purify my heart, and rectify my tongue, that both may be accepted of thee, and now and ever graciously directed by thee.

Lord, I acknowledge my faults, and my sin is ever before me. O let this sorrowful remembrance

of my sins invite thee to a sweet remembrance of thy mercies, that thou mayest have praise, and I the comfort of thy gracious pardon.

Lord, let my heart be inflamed with thy love, and my mouth filled with thy praise, that I may sacrifice my soul unto thee, that I may sanctify my soul before thee, by devout thoughts, by gracious words, and godly actions, that so I may with joyfulness appear in thy sight, not only all the day long, but even all my life long, that thou, my God, mayest be glorified, the saints delighted, and my sinful soul eternally comforted. — AMEN.



CHAP. XXXIX.

UPON HOLY REVENGE FOR SIN, WITH MOTIVES
AND ENCOURAGEMENTS THEREUNTO.

LORD,

I HAVE ever been too apt to revenge the smallest injuries offered unto me by others, in relation to my outward condition, and too remiss in that holy revenge of those great and insufferable wrongs which I daily and hourly obtrude upon mine own soul: this plainly sheweth me to have been too much favouring of flesh and blood, too little mindful of thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof: that soul which is truly sensible of its own injury, will (by thy grace) be daily minding of its own redress; and that sinner which is ~~uncon-~~
~~scious~~ ^{uncon-}scionable of slight offences, will in time become insensible of greater.

My greatest enemies are those of mine own household: the world may allure me, the devil persuade me, but it is mine own false heart alone that betrays me, and mine own corrupt nature that enslaves me: my greatest care shall therefore be, to bend my strongest force against mine own corruptions; to labour much to subdue mine affections, and to take

an holy revenge upon my sinful actions ; not to satisfy thy justice, but to implore thy mercy, that I may thereby truly manifest my perfect hatred against sin, and the sincerity of my soul to thy service.

There need none other motive to invite me to this holy duty, than the woeful breaches sin hath daily made in my soul, such as (without mercy) will never be repaired ; this is too sadly proved by the sensible decay of goodness, and the too powerful growth of ungodliness in my corrupt heart ; as it is easy for that castle to stand a close siege, that is well fortified, manned and victualled, so is it possible for that fort to hold out long which maketh no resistance.

Lord, as mine own spiritual ruins have hitherto been caused by mine own neglects, so (by thy gracious assistance) mine own repairs shall be begun and finished, by my present desires, and future endeavours.

That time which I have lost by former carelessness, and coldness in religion, I will endeavour to redeem by holy vigilance, and christian fortitude ; and that I may sincerely be what I intend, with willingness of heart, I offer up this solemn vow unto thee : Lord, as this holy motion came from thy heavenly spirit, so enable me to the perform-

ance of it, by thy grace to thy glory, and my soul's eternal comfort.

I vow myself a serious and professed enemy to all ungodliness; no sinful thought shall surprize me, without a sorrowful sigh; an ungracious word pass me without a sudden retraction, and devout confession; no wicked action defile me without a sincere and godly humiliation; unto each measure of sin I will allow a due measure of sorrow; those sins that have been reigning over me, shall, at set hours, be constantly revenged by me; and as my body hath been a deep sharer in my sins, so it shall be a daily sharer in my sufferings: I will at set seasons deny myself somewhat of these outward enjoyments (which thou, Lord, in mercy hast allowed me) as a true sign of my true sorrow for that sinful excess which I have too often taken without thy allowance. Those sinful hours which have been vainly lost in idleness, and emptiness, shall be willingly redeemed in a constant observation of religious duties; no day shall pass me without a solemn and devout task of devotion, no hour without some sweet ejaculation: and when at any time the troubles and disturbances of this frail life shall deny me happy opportunities for these heavenly performances, what is wanting in act, shall be made up in desire; which thou, Lord, I trust will graciously accept, and look upon as done, because faithfully intended.

O THOU infinitely wise, and for ever blessed being, that art truly and eternally happy, without the sinful service of thy creature; and yet com-mandest us to serve thee for our own sakes, that we may also be happy in thee; thou that lovest not a false and fickle heart, nor delightest in the sacrifice of fools, give me a wise and understanding heart, that I may seriously consider of this sacred vow; give me a constant and religious heart, that I may cheerfully perform what I have faithfully promised; give me a broken and contrite heart, that I may bitterly bewail what I have foolishly neglected; that thy great name may be glorified, my sinful life amended, my conscience quieted, my spirit comforted, thy saints delighted, thine angels rejoiced, and my soul and body eternally saved in that great and dreadful day of the Lord Jesus, to whom with thee, O blessed Father, and thine holy Spirit, be all possible praise, and honor, and glory, now and for ever.—AMEN.



CHAP. XL.

BEING A CALL TO ALL, GOOD AND BAD, SAINTS
AND SINNERS, TO ADDRESS THEMSELVES TO
THE GREAT WORK OF MAKING ALL READY FOR
A DYING HOUR.

WHAT is the language of all this? Verily it calls aloud upon all, good and bad, saints and sinners, to make it our great business to set all things right in the matters of our souls, and make all ready for a dying hour: and O that we would make this improvement of this great truth, and of God's sparing goodness to us! He spares us, and why does he spare us, but that we should set all things right, and make all things ready?

O that we would now fall in with the end and design of God herein, making it our great care and business in time to provide for eternity, in life to make ready for death.

Some of you, I verily believe, are about this work, and the Lord prosper you in it: you know you were born for eternity, and you do endeavour to live for eternity; your great work in time is to make provision for a blessed eternity.

O happy souls that you are! others of us; and those, by far the most (I fear) are utterly negligent in this business; death and eternity are little minded by us; but we are in a sleepy, drowsy, secure spirit, and to such (methinks) this truth speaks in a language much like to that of the ship master to Jonah, chap. 1. 6. "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise and call upon thy God, if so be he will think on us, that we perish not."

So what mean you, O you sleepy, drowsy, secure souls! Arise, make ready for a dying hour; set all things right, all things in order in your spiritual concerns, lest death come upon you unawares, and you be lost for ever; and to such of us I would say, as sometimes God did by the prophet to Hezekiah, Isai. 38. 1. "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live."

So I say to you, set your hearts in order, your spiritual concerns in order; make all even between God and you, for you shall shortly die, and not live; you shall shortly go hence, and be no more.

And why should we not all do so, if you be to change your condition in the world, how careful and solicitous are you to have all things ready and in order for that change

Why (my beloved) you are shortly to pass under that great and last change; a change from time to eternity; and will you have no care, no solicitude to make ready for that change? If you are to take a journey, though but a few miles, or to make a voyage into a strange land; O how are you concerned to have all things ready, all things in a prepared posture, in order thereunto?

And (my beloved) should not you be more concerned to make ready for your great journey, your last and great voyage? You are making a journey, a voyage out of time into eternity; you are just launching forth into the great ocean: and what, nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing set right in order thereunto? That is strange! If you have some great business, a business of more than ordinary importance to be done, or a suit at law to be tried or determined; O how close do you follow it? and how careful are you to have all things ready in order thereunto?

And (my beloved) should you not be as careful and diligent to prepare, and set all things right for the great business of your souls in another world? Have you any business, any concern of greater importance to you, than the concern of your souls, and eternity? If you are to appear before some earthly judge, especially if it be about a matter that

concerns your life; O how thoughtful are you to have all things ready and in order, in reference thereunto?

And (my beloved) should you not be as thoughtful and solicitous to make all ready, and to set all right, in order to your appearing before the Judge of all the earth; and that about a matter which concerns the life of your souls, about a matter of eternal life and death.

Well, what shall I say? Will you set about this great business, this great concern? Or, is it all one with you, whether you live or die, are saved, or damned to eternity? God yet spares you, blessed be his name; will you not set all right, before you go hence and be no more? Sinners, will you set about this great business? Your work is wholly yet to do; though, it may be, your day is far spent, your glass is almost run, your sun near setting, and all your work to do. Oh 'tis high time for you to awake out of sleep; unless you mean to sleep the sleep of eternal death.

Saints, will you set about this great business, while God spares you? You have done somewhat, but there is much more yet to be done; there is much out of order yet in your souls: grace weak,

(it may be) corruption strong, peace broken, evidences stained and blotted; unbelief powerful within you, the heart much estranged from God; little suitableness to heaven in your spirits, and the like; will you now labour to recover strength? How many of us may complain, as that holy man (St. Bernard) once did? "I am ashamed to live, because I am so unprofitable; and I am afraid to die, because I am so unprepared." Surely this truth concerns the best of us all: and if we understand ourselves, we cannot but know it; the Lord help us to know it effectually.

And if after all, you would indeed address to this great work and business, then I have several great and weighty directions to propound to you for your help therein, of which some more general, some more particular, and I would speak of each distinctly.



CHAP. XLI.

WHEREIN ARE PROPOUNDED SEVERAL DIRECTIONS, IN ORDER TO A THOROUGH PREPARATION OF SOUL FOR A DYING HOUR.

1. **WOULD** you indeed set all things right in your souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then in your most prosperous and flourishing state here, maintain a frequent and serious remembrance of death and the grave upon your spirit. If a man live many years (saith Solomon) and rejoice in them all; yet let them remember the days of darkness, for they are many, Ecclef. 11. 8.

By the days of darkness here, we are to understand death, and the state of death; the abode of our bodies in the grave, which is a land of darkness, and where the light is as darkness, Job 10. 20. Now, saith he, though a man live many years, and rejoice in them all; that is, though a man live long and prosperously, long and joyfully; yet let him remember death and the grave, the future state.

'Tis true, there are other days of darkness, which we are subject to in this world, and should be re-

membered by us: days of outward darknes, the darknes of outward trouble and affliction; and days of inward darknes, the darknes of spiritual distress and dereliction; and indeed 'tis of marvelous use to us in our prosperity, to remember these days of darknes; but especially we should remember death and the grave.

We should carry a lively remembrance of these days of darknes daily upon us; and indeed our not remembering these days of darknes, is one great cause why we are so unready for death, and the grave, as we are.

When we are in the midst of our enjoyments, and the streams run pleasantly about us, we are too apt to forget these days of darknes; we are so taken with our earthly comforts, that we are loath to think of death, and eternity, putting far from us the evil day; as those in their enjoyments did, Amos 6. 3. And therefore when these days come, they find us so unready, and our spiritual concerns so discomposed as usually they do.

But (my beloved) as ever you would have all right and in order in your poor souls against a dying hour comes: let me recommend this to you, as one special help; maintain a deep and frequent remembrance of death and the grave upon your spirits;

remember the days of darkness, and that especially these two ways.

1. Remember them so as to have them much in your meditation: be much and frequent in the contemplation of death and the grave. This the Holy Ghost calls a considering our latter end; and withal, mentions as a business of great importance to us, Deut. 32. 29. To consider, is to revolve a thing in our minds, and to keep it much in our thoughts and meditations.

And thus we should consider our latter end, and remember the days of darkness: this is that the saints of old have been much conversant in; they were much and frequent in the thoughts and meditations of death: as I might instance in the good old Patriarchs *Job*, *David*, and others: and 'tis what does marvellously conduce to our preparation for it.

The meditation of death (saith one) is life; it is that which greatly promotes our spiritual life; therefore, walk much among the tombs, and converse much and frequently with the thoughts of a dying hour.

2. Remember them so, as to have them daily in your expectation. In the midst of all your enjoy-

ments, expect death's approach daily: this is called a waiting for our change. "All the days of my appointed time, will I wait till my change comes," Job 14. 14. And we are commanded to wait for the coming of our Lord; as that which lies in the direfcest tendency to the exactest readiness and preparation for his coming, Luke, 12. 36. Expect death every hour (saith one) for 'tis every hour approaching thee: in the morning when thou risest, think with thyself, this may be the last day: in the evening, when thou liest down, think with thyself, this may be the last night I may ever have in this world. I know not when my Lord will come, whether in the morning, or in the evening, at midnight, or at the cock-crowing: therefore I will be always expecting his coming. Woe and alas for us! we are apt to talk of many years yet to come, as he did, Luke 12. 9. whereas we should live in the expectation of death every moment.

Thus let us consider the days of darkness, it will marvellously conduce to the preparation of the soul for them: the meditation and expectation of death will conduce much (among others) to these four things:

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and self-debasing: let a man own himself to be a mortal (saith Austin) and pride will, it must down. And

think frequently of death, (saith another) and thou wilt easily bring down thy proud heart. Hence also, the consideration of death is often in scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghost, as an argument to make us humble; dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3. 19. as elsewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our hearts from this world; and the loosening of them from the things here below: the time is short (saith the apostle) what then? Why it remaineth, that they that have wives, be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; those that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31.

He mentions the shortness of time, as that the meditation and expectation whereof, has the directest tendency in it, to wean and loosen the heart from all things here below. And indeed (as St. Bernard hath it) he easily contemns all things here, who looks upon himself as dying daily.

3. It will conduce much to engaging the heart to heaven; and the things of heaven, to a serious pursuit of a blessed eternity.

So we find, Heb. 11. 13. &c. These all died in the faith (saith the apostle) not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them; and confessed, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth; that is, they were apprehensive they had but a little time to stay here: and what then? They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: the apprehension they had of their departure hence, quickened them into earnest desires and pursuits after the better country, the heavenly land; and indeed one great reason why we breath no more, and press no more after heaven, and a blessed eternity, is, because we so seldom remember these days of darkness.

4. It will conduce much to the quickening of the heart to duty, and to diligence and faithfulness therein. Christ himself made use of it for this end: I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work, John 9. 4. Peter also, that holy apostle made use of it to that end: I will not be negligent (saith he), to do so and so in the way of my duty, as knowing that I shall shortly put off this tabernacle, 2 Pet. 1. 12, 13, 14.

The consideration of the near approach of his death quickened him to his work and duty, And

the scripture propounds it, as that which has a tendency to this thing : Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might (saith Solomon ;) for there is no work nor counsel in the grave, whether thou art going, Ecclef. 9. 10.

He propounds the consideration of our going to the grave, as a means to quicken us to our present work. By all which we see, how much the serious remembrance of the days of darkness must needs contribute to our readines and preparedness for these days: therefore be much in this work. For my own part, I have hardly found any one thing more quickening and engaging upon my spirit than this: and souls, I would beg you, as you would live for ever, think often of death.

2. Would you indeed set all things right in your souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be not fond of long life here in this world; but rather covet to live as much as possibly in a little time. I would speak of each distinctly.

1. Be not fond of long life here in this world. A fond hope and desire of long life here, is one of the greatest enemies to a true preparation of soul for our departure hence.

For pray observe, take a man that is fond of long life here, and all his thoughts and projects are for this world: he is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the concerns of time, scarce allowing himself one serious thought for death and eternity: a sad instance you have hereof in 'this rich man, Luke 12. 29. He reckoned upon many years, upon a long life here; and what are the things he is taken up about? Verily the things of this world only, the increase of his goods, and where to store his treasures.

Fond hopes and desires of long life here, will certainly produce great delays, if not utter neglects, in the great work and concern of our souls and eternity.

As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the concerns of your souls when you come to die, be not fond of long life here, but sit as loose in your thoughts, hopes, and desires, both of this life, and all the enjoyments of it, as possibly you can.

And indeed (my beloved) to reason it a little with you, why should you be fond of long life here? Why should you covet a long stay in this world? I would only plead with you in two things as to this:

1. What is this world, and what have we here, that we should here covet a long stay? Is this world such a sweet, such an amiable, such a desirable thing? It is an angry world, a frowning, a dirty, a bewitching, ensnaring world: 'tis a waste, howling wilderness, a strange land, an house of bondage, a troublesome tempestuous sea, an *aceldama*, a field of blood; such I am sure 'tis oftentimes to the poor faints and people of God; and what have we here? Why, here we have fears within, and fightings without, troubles on every side, and from all hands; from friends, from enemies, from men, from devils; here we have sorrow, snares, losses, wounds, deaths, dangers, temptations, seductions, disappointments, vexation of spirit and truly, little else is to be expected by us here, except that which is worse than all this, (*viz.*) daily raisings and ebullitions of lust, violent eruptions of corruptions, great aboundings of sin and iniquity, both in ourselves and others: continual breakings with God, and departings from him, renewing and encreasing sin and guilt daily. Indeed this world is full of sin, and temptation to sin: 'tis (as *Austin* says) *tota tentatio*, all temptation; and as 'tis all temptation, so 'tis little else but sin: and why should we covet a long stay here? Why (says one of the antients) should we so much desire that life, in which, by how much the longer we live, by

so much the more we sin ; and the more numerous our days are, the more numerous will our sins be? Who would desire to stay long in a prison, or a dungeon, in a state and place of sin and sorrow? And such is this world.

2. Is there not a better life, a better place, a better state for our souls to long and aspire after? What do you think of the life above, a whole eternity spent in the Divine Presence, in the bosom of Divine Love, a life of love, a life of pleasure, a life of joy, a life of admiration, a life of holiness, perfect and unspotted holiness, a life every way correspondent to the divine life, and the divine will? Is not this a better life? To be with Christ is best of all, Phil. 1. 23. To possess a mansion in our Father's house, prepared by our Lord, and Head, Jesus Christ, for us; to live for ever in the vision and fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit; to dwell in the heavenly city, where no unclean thing can enter; to join in with the glorious host of saints and angels above, and with them to spend a whole eternity in songs of praises and hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb; to take up all our waters at the fountain-head; and indeed to dive and bathe unchangeably in the fountain of all delights at the Father's right hand: O how sweet is this life! and how much to be desired by us!

In a word (my beloved) the saints, when in the best frame, have many of them been so far from being fond of long life here, that indeed they have thought it long till the time came, when they should go hence and be no more, crying out with an holy impatience,—Why is his chariot so long a coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariot?

2. Covet to live much in a little time. 'Tis said of the reverend and worthy divine, Dr. *Preston*, that he desired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little time. And our Lord himself (you know) did not live long in this world; but he lived much in a little time; he did much work in a few days for God and souls. And indeed (my beloved) 'tis not a long life but a fruitful life, that is most amiable, most desirable, and most like his life, who is life itself. 'Tis not he that lives many years, but he that lives much in a few years, that is the most happy soul.

I know those, whose ambition it is not to live long, but to live fruitfully, and to do as much as possibly they can in a little time. And might they have their opinion or choice, it would be this, to live much in a little time; and then have their dismissal to rest.

And (my beloved) let this be your choice, and your ambition; be casting about in yourselves, how you may live much in a little time; how you may compass much spiritual work and business in a few days; labour to treasure up much grace, much experience of God and his love; to bring a large revenue of glory to him, and the like. And for this end possess your souls with a deep sense of the exceeding worth and preciousness of time; and accordingly set yourselves to redeem it, looking upon the loss thereof to be the greatest loss in the world. Eph. 5. 16,—we are commanded to redeem the time; and what is it to redeem the time, but to esteem time as precious, as a thing of incomparable worth and value; and accordingly to make the best and highest improvement of it for the honor of God, and good of our souls, that possibly we can? It is to fill up our time with duty, and our duties with grace; to make use of time for those ends, for which time is given us; not to eat, and drink, and solace ourselves in the creature, but to serve and honor the Creator! to work out our salvation; to get acquaintance with God and Christ; to make sure of heaven and a blessed eternity.

O sirs! look upon time as precious; so indeed it is: time is the most weighty and momentous thing in the world: 'tis that which our eternal ALL depends upon: according as we do, or do not manage

or improve our time well, so will it go with us for ever.

'Tis a sweet meditation which I have read in a discourse of an holy man:—this life (saith he) of ours is most swift; and yet in it eternal life is either gotten or lost for ever. This life of ours is most miserable; and yet in it eternal happiness is either gotten or lost for ever. No less than a whole eternity of happiness or misery, salvation or damnation, depends upon our use and management of our little time here in this world, As the tree falls so it lies, Eccles. 12. 3. As it is with us when we go out of time, so it will be with us to all eternity; and this we should be much in the thoughts of, accounting therefore the loss of time to be the greatest loss.

'Tis a weighty saying, which I have read in one of the antients:—It is a great and heavy loss indeed (saith he) when we neither do good nor think good (and let me add, nor get good) but we suffer our hearts to wander abroad about vain and unprofitable things; and yet it is too difficult to restrain or keep them back from these things.

Truly, no loss like the loss of time; the loss of estate, the loss of trade, the loss of this or the other:

outward comfort, is nothing to the loss of time. These being lost, may be recovered again ; but time being lost, can never be recovered more. Accordingly set yourselves to redeem it, and do it as much as possibly you can, accounting that day lost, wherein you have not done something for God and your souls. The truth is, we live no more than we are conversant in the work of God and our souls : for as for that which we call life, that is not spent in this work, it is not indeed to be accounted life.

Thirdly, Would you indeed set all things right in your souls, make all ready for a dying hour ? then think much and often with yourselves, how great a change death will make with you whenever it comes. Death is a change, and in many respects the greatest change which the sons of men are to pass through, All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change comes, Job 14. 14. *Job* had many changes, and great changes : changes and war were upon him, as he complained, Job 10. 16. But no change like this of death, this was the great change, and this he waited for all his days. Indeed death is a great change to every man and woman, come when or how it will ; 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives men of all their enjoyments here ; which dissolves the union betwixt soul and body ; which turns the body to dust and putrefaction ; and (which is unspeakably more than

this) it is that through which the soul enters into the immediate presence of God, and states it in eternity; it is a change from time to eternity, from works to rewards, a reward suitable to the work we have here been doing, whether it be good or evil; and is not this a great change? Take a few hints in particular about it, to shew the greatness of it.

First, It is such a change, as all other changes upon the outward man are but leading and introductory unto, and into which at last they all issue, and resolve themselves. We pass through many changes here in this world. We may say as *Job*, changes and war are upon us. But these are but leading and preliminary, as it were, to this last and great change; these all are, or should be to us, monitors of this last change, and do but a little darkly shadow it out unto us.

Secondly, It is such a change as calls for great spiritual changes to pass upon us here, to fit and prepare us for it; a change in our minds, a change in our wills, a change in our affections, a change in our conversation, a change in our whole man; a real change, a thorough change, an universal change: old things must be done away, and all things must become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. The mind must be changed from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge in spiritual things: the will

must be changed from enmity to subjection, from rebellion to obedience to God and his laws; the affections must be changed from earthiness to heavenliness; from carnality to spirituality; the conversation must be changed from sin to holiness; from vanity and looseness, to strictness and seriousness in walking with God. O how great must that change be, that calls for so many, and so great changes, to fit and prepare us for it?

Thirdly, It is such a change, as tho' it do not put us out of being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of being than ever we yet had; a change which sets us naked before the tribunal of God, to receive a definitive sentence of life or death from him; a change which brings us into the immediate sight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a revenging Judge; a change which fully opens the eyes of the soul, and makes him to see both grace and sin, heaven and hell; grace in its amiableness, sin in its odiousness; heaven in its glory, and hell in its horror: for (my beloved) whatever we are, whether good or bad, saints or sinners; yet when we die, our eyes will be fully opened, to see these things; we shall see unutterable things; if we be good, we shall see them with joy and exultation; if we be bad, we shall see them with anguish and confusion of soul.

Fourthly, It is such a change, as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into unspeakably greater things, either of happiness or misery, comfort or confusion, than ever here we knew, or were capable of; a change, which in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, carries the soul from small first fruits to the full vintage; from a few drops to a bottomless, boundless ocean of either happiness or vengeance; delight or torment. And withal there leaves him without any possibility of change or alteration for ever, but that of its re-union with the body; for it is such a change, as leaves the state of the soul for ever unchangeable. O then, think much and often with yourselves, how great a change death will make with you! Certainly, did men think and consider with themselves, how great a change death will make with them when it comes, they would not leave the matters of their souls in such disorder and discomposure, in such an unready posture for it as they do.

Fifthly, Would you indeed set all right in your souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then presently set upon soul-work, without admitting of the least delay or procrastination upon any account whatsoever: delays and procrastinations in the work of our souls and eternity, is the high-way to death and ruin.

What was it that ruined the foolish virgins, but their delays in this great work, and their neglect of the great concerns of their souls, till it was too late to mind them? Matt. 25. 1. *Felix* also was in a fair way, and had a fair opportunity before him, to have provided for another world; but he delayed, and his delay (for ought we know) was his ruin, Acts 22. 25.

Truly the heart is very apt to delay and procrastinate soul-work: it is apt to cry out, to-morrow, to-morrow. Hence it is that the scripture calls so often upon us for a speedy engaging in the work of our souls; the scripture saith, now, and to day; now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And to day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, Heb. 3. 7, 8. And if the scripture saith, now, why shouldest thou talk of hereafter? If the scripture saith to day, why shouldest thou talk of to-morrow? *Austin* confesseth this, and withal tells us, there is scarce any end delays, if once we give way to them: I delayed (saith he) to be converted to God, and put off my living to him from day to day. And elsewhere he tells us, that when God called upon him to awake to his work, he returned nothing but a few sleepy words; anon, Lord, (saith he) anon; bear with me a little: but this anon and anon had no end; and this, bear with me a little went on a long way,

Take heed of this, this hath been the ruin of thousands, and ten thousands: how many have been convinced that it is their duty, and interest both, to fall in with the work of God and their souls, to make preparation for another world? But they have put it off till hereafter, and satisfied their consciences with resolutions hereafter to do so and so; and have thus lost their season: oh! fall presently without delay upon soul-work: and to quicken you a little hereunto, consider four things:

First, Consider the unreasonableness of delays; no just plea can be made, nor true account given, why you should delay your soul-work one moment: the devil and a man's own heart will make many pleas, but no just plea can be made; they will tell you it is too soon, you are young, and have time enough before you, what need you engage so soon? But is this a rational plea? Is it too soon to be saved, too soon to be happy, too soon to secure your eternal interest? Is it too soon to lay hold on eternal life? Is it too soon to know and enjoy God? Is it too soon to be out of danger of perishing eternally? Why truly it cannot be too soon for these things; besides, God calls for thy youth, Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, Eccles. 12. 1. And he greatly values the kindness of thy youth, Jer. 2. 2. Again, they will suggest, that such and such a business must be dispatched,

such a work done and carried off your hands, and then you may attend this work ; Lord (saith he to Christ) I will follow thee ; but suffer me first to go and bury my father. And saith another, Lord, I will follow thee ; but first let me go and bid them farewell which are home, Luke 9. 57, 61.

But friends, let me ask you, if there be any business to be dispatched like the business of your souls, and eternity ? Is there any thing upon your hand ; that is of so much worth as your souls, and of so much weight as eternity ? Is there any thing you are so nearly concerned to mind ; as that which is indeed the one thing necessary, even the saving of your souls ? Oh ! the whole world is nothing to this, and the greatest concernments on earth, are but trifles to this concern.

Again, they will tell you it is an inconvenient season, and hereafter the work may be better done and minded by you, than now it can ; which was *Felix's* case in the place before mentioned, Acts 24. 25. But hearken, soul, art thou sure of another season ? and art thou sure that that will be a more convenient season ? surely no : if it be not convenient to day, thou mayest fear it will be less convenient to-morrow, that devil and deceitful heart that tells thee it is not convenient now, will make provision that it shall be less convenient hereafter.

O, therefore, break through all these pleas, and fall speedily upon foul-work.

Secondly, Consider the danger of delays: delays in this case are exceeding dangerous; one day's, yea (for any thing I know) one hour's delay herein, may prove thine eternal undoing! it may prove the loss of Christ, the loss of heaven, and the loss of thy soul, and all for ever. Alas! art thou sure thou shalt live one day, one hour more in this world? for ought thou knowest, the next moment thou goest down into the grave, *Job 21. 13*. But in case thou shouldst live longer in the world, art thou sure the gospel and the means of grace shall be continued to thee? If thou shouldst not be taken from the world, yet the gospel may be taken from thee; though the day of thy life may last a while longer, yet the day of gospel-grace and mercy, may suddenly expire; and if that be once gone, all the tenders of Christ, all the offers of grace, all the exhibitions of life and salvation are gone; if the gospel be once gone, thy season is gone, and thy soul is gone, and thy salvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore, saith the apostle, now is the accepted time, speaking of the day of gospel-mercy, now is the day of salvation, *2 Cor. 6, 2*.

Or, grant thou shouldst live, and the gospel should be continued to thee, as to the outward means; yet art thou sure that the day and season of grace will last any longer than this present moment? Remember that sad word which the Lord breathed out with tears in his eyes, over neglecting Jerusalem, Luke 19. 43. O that thou hadst known, at least this in thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. Alas! how soon may God withdraw his spirit from thee? how soon may he call home his grieved spirit from thy neglecting, resisting soul, once for all, saying, my spirit shall strive no more with that man? Gen. 6. 3.

How soon may God seal thee up under judicial blindness and hardness of heart, so that thou shalt never be able to believe or to do any thing for the good of thy soul, in order to another world?—Thou talkest of to-morrow, and of hereafter; but who knows, but that before to-morrow, God may clap the seal of an hard heart, and a blind mind upon thee? So as that tho' thou shouldst live a thousand years, and withal enjoy the fairest means that ever any soul enjoyed; yet thou shouldst be never able to believe or repent, to do any thing for the working out of thy salvation. It is oftentimes his way of proceeding with neglecting, delaying ones, Isa. 6. 10. Job 11. 39, 40.

Or, how soon may the oath of God go forth against thee? Thou talkest of to-morrow; but alas! who knows but that before to-morrow, God may swear in his wrath, thou shalt not enter into his rest? It is what is threatened against such as will not hear his voice to day, but harden their hearts against him, Heb. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There is a time when God's oath goeth forth against souls, and such and such sinners, for their contempt and neglect of Christ and Grace; a time not only when God saith, but sweareth, and that in wrath, that they should never enter into his rest; and if once God's oath is gone out against a man, that man is past recovery; then farewell Christ, and heaven, and soul, and all for ever. O how dangerous are delays, therefore take heed of them, and fall presently upon soul-work.

Thirdly, Consider the disadvantage of delays: delays herein are disadvantageous, as well as dangerous. Indeed, were there no danger in them (I mean as to the eternal state) yet the disadvantage of them is so great, as if rightly considered, might be enough to antidote the soul against them, and engage it presently in the work which relates to another world. Pray consider it a little; by delays the soul loseth much sweet communion with Christ, and many a blessed communication of love from

him, which he might enjoy. The sooner we fall upon the work of heaven and eternity, the sooner we come to a taste and beginning of heaven, and a blessed eternity in our souls: O the sweet embraces, the blessed discoveries, the glorious incomes of love and delight that the soul loses by his delays to get into Christ, and to walk with God, and to mind eternal concernments! Poor soul, by thy delays, thou hast lived upon husks and swill all thy days hitherto, whereas thou mightest have eaten bread in thy Father's house, and drank wine new in thy Father's kingdom: thou hast lived on the muddy, dungy, droffy delights of sin and the creature, whereas thou mightest have solaced and delighted thy soul with those christal streams of undefiled pleasures, which are at Christ's and his Father's right hand. Besides, by delays, the work of thy soul grows more difficult; hereby corruption grows more strong, and the heart grows more hard: by every day's delay, the old enmity strengthens itself, and the soul is more and more settled upon its lees. For accustomedness in sinning, hardens the heart in sin, as is hinted, Jer. 13. 23. Every day the soul is more alienated from Christ, and hardened against him. At best, if thy Soul doth at last come to see its need of Christ, and desireth to close with him, and to mind the work and concerns of another world; yet the longer thou delayest this business, the greater temptations thou wilt have to get over:

for, though now thy heart saith it is too soon, yet after a few days delay, it will say it is too late; it will be apt to conclude, that now thy day is over, and now Christ will have nothing to do with thee: O why shouldst thou be such an enemy to thy own soul, as to run it upon these disadvantages? rather avoid them by falling presently upon soul-work.

Fourthly, Consider the sinfulness of Delays, and the horrible guilt they bring upon the soul: as delays are dangerous and disadvantageous, so they are sinful too, exceeding sinful, and provoking to the God of heaven. The truth is, were there no danger in them, no disadvantage by them to the soul; yet the sinfulness of them is such, as should make us afraid of them: in every day's delay to mind, and pursue soul-work, there is positive rebellion and disobedience to the will and command of God: for the command is, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, Heb. 3. 7, 8. By delaying therefore, thou rebellest against the commandment. In every day's delay to mind and pursue soul-work, there is horrible unkindness and ingratitude to God and Christ; which surely is a black sin, and brings great guilt upon the soul. God spares you time after time, when he might cast you off the next moment. And this he doth, that you may pursue the work of your souls and

eternity; and O what unkindness, what ingratitude must it be in us to neglect, and put off this work? In every delay to mind and pursue soul-work, there is much contempt of Christ and grace; and this is that which makes it be exceeding sinful; Christ offers himself and his grace to you, he offers you life, he offers you peace, he offers you pardon, he offers you righteousness, he offers you strength, he offers you all the treasures of heaven; and withal calls upon you to accept these offers, and to take home these things to yourselves; but you, by your delays, pour contempt upon all; you in effect say neither Christ, nor his grace, nor the purchase of his blood, are worth minding, worth looking after. O what contempt is this? and what sin is this? By delays you do in effect say, there is something better than Christ, and something of greater concernment to you than Salvation by Christ; you plainly say that in deed you will have Christ hereafter, and Salvation hereafter; but for the present you had much rather have your lusts and worldly pleasures. Oh! tremble at the thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your delays, and put you immediately upon soul-work.

In a word, never any pretended that they minded the concerns of their souls; union with Christ, walking with God, making sure their calling and *election* so soon; many have repented that they have

minded these things so late. I remember a bitter complaint of *Austin*, in his book of confessions, I have loved thee too late, faith he, O thou so ancient, and yet so new a beauty, I have loved thee too late. He bewails that he had so long laid out his love upon the creature, and not given Christ his love.

Could you ask all the saints in heaven, whether ever they repented that they minded the work of Christ and their souls so soon? they would tell you no, they repented of nothing but that they minded it so late. Once more, therefore, let me call upon you, to fall immediately upon soul-work, and never rest till thy heart cries out to God as *Austin* did, when God had really shewed him himself, and made him sensible of his sins;—When God, faith he, had shewed me my sin and misery, there arose a great storm within me, which carried with it a great shower of tears; and indeed, I let loose the reins to tears, crying out to God in such words as these:—O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou be angry? How long shall it be said, to-morrow, and to-morrow? Wherefore may it not be now? Why may there not an end be put to my sin and filthiness this very hour? And indeed, God made that very season the season of his conversion: so labour to see thy sin and misery so far, as thou mayest cry out with a holy restlessness to God—How long shall it

be to-morrow, and to-morrow? Why may it not be turned to thee now? Why may not my soul be engaged in the work of heaven and eternity now?

Fifthly; Would you indeed set all right in your souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be much and importunate with God in prayer, to teach you so to number your days, as to apply your hearts to wisdom: this I ground upon Psalm 90. 12. where Moses the man of God is found in this practice;—Lord, saith he, teach us to number our days, that we apply our hearts unto wisdom. To number our days, is not to number them in an arithmetical, but in a spiritual way; it is not to cast up how many days the life of man consists of; that is easily done; but it is spiritually and practically to consider, and lay to heart, the shortness and uncertainty of our lives, together with the various miseries and calamities that do attend them. So *Molleres*. It is seriously and fiducially to contemplate the vanity of life, as short and uncertain, and as attended with sorrows, miseries, and innumerable troubles, and to apply thy heart to wisdom: 'tis to make religion, and the work of a man's soul, his main business; it is to make it his great business, and endeavour to get an interest in God and Christ, in the Covenant of grace and eternal life; and in time to provide for, and make sure of a blessed eternity; it

is to set a man's whole soul to the work of God, and his own salvation. Now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a dying hour, beg of God to teach you thus to number your days, and thus to apply your hearts to wisdom. There are two things I would observe, and so close this.

First, That such a numbering of our days, is what the best of saints need, and may make great use of. *Moses* was a very holy man, and he looked upon it as a work useful, and of great importance to him to contemplate the vanity of life, and to think of the shortness and uncertainty of his abode here; the most holy souls need this; the most holy souls need humbling, they need weaning from this world, they need quickening unto duty, they need to have their hearts awakened, to mind heaven and a future life; and the right numbering of our days, is that which greatly conduceth thereunto.

Secondly, Observe, that as this is a work needful and useful for the best of saints to be employed in; so it is a work above their own strength, and that which they need divine assistance to enable them unto. *Moses* was an eminently holy man, and yet as he saw he had need of this, so he saw it was a work above his power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himself amongst the rest, and prays for his teaching herein. Let us do so like-

wife, let us lie much at the foot of God for his teachings, whereby we may be enabled so to number our days as thus to apply our hearts unto wisdom; beg him to make us see the vanity and uncertainty of our lives, and that so as effectually to engage us to make out after a better life.



CHAP. XLII.

WHEREIN MORE PARTICULAR HELPS AND DIRECTIONS ARE LAID DOWN, IN ORDER TO THE SETTING OF THINGS RIGHT, AND MAKING ALL READY FOR A DYING HOUR.

BUT I would come nearer this great Business, and give you some more particular directions, in order to your making all ready for a dying hour. And,

First, Would you indeed have all things right in the matters of your souls for a dying hour? then get into Christ, get union with Christ, and an interest in Christ, by believing. Union with Christ and an interest in Christ, is most requisite and necessary to fit and prepare us for a dying hour; and without we have it, we can have nothing set right, nothing in order, nothing in readiness for that hour. You know how the scripture speaks,—He that hath the Son, hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life, 1 John 5. 12. And there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1.

O my beloved, we shall live or die, be saved or damned for ever, according as we do or do not get an union with Christ, and an interest in Christ. This is that which lies at the bottom and foundation of all, of all our hopes, and of all our mercies, or all our Comforts, of all our acceptation and communion with God, of all grace on earth, and all glory in heaven; and without it, whatsoever our attainments in religion are, whatever our profession may be, whatever place or esteem we may have in the Church of God, though never so raised and eminent, yet we have not any thing that will avail us in a dying hour. I remember a saying of a learned man, That thou mayest live in death, saith he, get into Christ, implant thyself into Christ by believing. Faith joins and unites us to Christ, and they that are in Christ cannot die, for Christ is their life. And indeed, if we can have union with Christ, he will be life in death itself to us:—Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; that is, die, having union with Christ, being implanted into Christ, Rev. 14. 13.

If we have union with Christ, he will not be only life in death to us, but he will even turn death itself into life: the king of terrors, into a king of comforts; infomuch that the soul shall be able to triumph over it, as the apostle doth, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. Wherea without this, without union

with Christ, an interest in Christ, we shall never be able to look death in the face with comfort, but shall, when we come to die, be some of the miserablest spectacles in the world. It is the speech of a worthy divine, who is so long since gone hence, a christless dying man or woman (saith he) is one of the saddest spectacles in the world: for a man to be dying, and not christless, that is comfortable; for such a one dies but to live for ever; he dies the death of nature, to live the life of glory; for a man to be christless, and not dying, is something tolerable: for who knows, but that the next meeting at an ordnance, may be the time of God's love to him of drawing him into Christ?

But for a man to be dying and christless; christless and dying too, that is intolerable, that is terrible indeed; for such an one dies to be damned, and he is going off from all hopes and possibilities of mercy for ever: oh therefore aboveall, press after an union with Christ, and an interest in Christ: this was *Paul's* great care and solicitude to the very last, that so he might go off the stage with comfort; and that for which he accounted all things but dung, as most base and vile, Phil. 3. 8, 9.

O soul, didst thou indeed know and consider of how much weight and importance an interest in

Christ is to thee, with reference to thine eternal happiness, thou wouldst cry out as eagerly for Christ, as *Rachael* did for her children, saying, 'give me Christ, or else I die; give me union with Christ, and an interest in Christ, or I am undone eternally. O look to the great uniting act of faith, make a right choice of Christ; chuse him as your Lord and head, your King and Saviour, and renew your choice of him every day, resigning up yourselves entirely to him, to be saved and governed by him in his own way.

Secondly: Would you indeed have all set right, and made ready in the matters of your souls for a dying hour? Then press after a firm and unshaken assurance of an interest in God, and his love, and of your right and title to eternal life of another, and better life than this here. Without some good evidence for heaven, and some well-grounded assurance of an interest in God and eternal life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in such a preparedness for a dying hour, as we ought to be.

Though a man have an interest in God and his love; though he hath a right and title to eternal life and happiness; yet as long as he is in the dark, and at an uncertainty in his own soul about it, things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying hour: for pray mark, as our

interest in this is requisite to our dying happily; so the sight and assurance of that interest, is requisite to our dying comfortably: indeed, when a man hath attained to some good evidence for heaven, to some well-grounded assurance of his interest in God and Christ, then are things in a good posture with him in reference to a dying hour; then he can play with death, and triumph over it; as *Job* did, when he could say, I know that my Redeemer liveth, *Job* 19. 25, 26. And as the apostle seems to speak of it, 2 *Cor.* 5. 12. We know that when our earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved, we have a building of God. An house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens: for this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our house which is from heaven. None of you do comfortably leave your house unless you have another to go unto; much less can you comfortably quit this world, unless you have some well-grounded assurance of another and a better life. Take a man that is in the dark, and at a loss as to his interest in God and Christ, and he knows not what death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in heaven or hell, whether upon the throne of glory, or in the prison of eternal darkness; in the bosom of Christ's love, or under the revelation of his infinite and eternal wrath: and is such a one ready for a dying hour? surely no. As ever

therefore, you would have things right and ready within, indeed, for a dying hour, you must press after an assurance of your interest in God and Christ; you must do as the apostle exhorts, Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. You must every day press after a fuller and firmer assurance as to your eternal interest; you must be much in faith, much in prayer, much in examining your evidences, much in proving your state, much in looking after the seal and evidences of the blessed spirit: which is indeed all in all; and never rest till you can say, my Lord, and my God, my heaven, my glory; God is the rock of my heart, and my portion for ever. O then all will be sweet and well with you. This is that which the saints of old have laboured after with their whole might. Say unto my soul (saith David to God) I am thy salvation, Psal. 35. 3. Set me as a seal upon thy heart, and a signet upon thine arm, Cant. 8. 6. This *Austin* pressed much after, Lord, saith he, tell me what thou art to me. Say unto my soul I am thy salvation: so say it, that I may hear it: behold, the ears of my heart are before thee; open them, O Lord, and say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

O my beloved, this is worth pressing after, for this is the welcomest news a poor soul can possibly hear, to be told that God is his, and heaven is his,

and eternal life is his; and when once this news is come, then welcome life, and welcome death: welcome time, and welcome eternity: then the soul can say, O sweet eternity, O blessed eternity! O firs, be not satisfied without some good assurance of God's love to your souls, and your right and title to heaven and eternal life! Yea, without the fullest assurance that is attainable here; for know, that there are degrees in assurance itself. The scripture mentions three degrees of assurance. First, there is assurance, the work of righteousness is peace, and the fruit of righteousness is assurance for ever, Isa. 31. 17. And give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, as in the place before quoted.

Secondly, there is much assurance: Our gospel came unto you, not in word only, but in power, and in the demonstration of the spirit, and much assurance, 1. Theff. 1. 5.

Thirdly, There is a full assurance. We desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end, Heb. 6. 11. Now my beloved, I would not have you satisfied without assurance, without much assurance; yea, without a full assurance; the more full yours

assurance is, the more chearfully, joyfully, and triumphantly will you die.

Thirdly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order in the matters of your souls for a dying hour, then labour to maintain a constant actual peace with God; every day making even with him, and renewing the sense of his pardoning love in your souls as a firm union with Christ, and a well-grounded assurance of an interest in God, and eternal life; so also, an actual peace with God, and a daily renewed pardon from him is requisite to a thorough readiness and preparedness for a dying hour. *David* had an interest in God; yea, and his interest was clear to him; yet how solicitous was he to get all even before God and him? and how uncomfortable was it with him, till he had renewed his peace with God, when by his fall it had been broken? Psalm 51. 8, 12. This also is what is evidently held forth, Job 7. 21. Where Job pleads thus with God;—Why dost thou not pardon mine iniquity, and take away my transgression? for now shall I sleep in the dust; thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

In the verse before, he acknowledgeth he had sinned, and here he intimates, that God frowned on him for his sin; the sense of pardoning love was not renewed in his soul, which here, therefore, he

pleads for, and that upon this account, because he was speedily to die; intimating he could not die with comfort, till he had a renewed sense of God's pardoning love. And this is the very thing which *David* begs in the psalm of my text, in order to his comfortable going hence, (viz.) That God would take away his transgressions, Psalm 39. 8.

As long as there is any sin, any guilt lying upon our consciences, any sin unpardoned, any difference between God and us, any frowns in his face towards us, we are unready for death, and cannot with that comfort and boldness of spirit, welcome it as we ought; but when our peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed sense of his pardoning love in our souls, then are things right and in order with us in heed, and we may think of death with boldness and comfort; and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a dying hour; every day even things between God and you; every day get a fresh sense of pardon from him.

First, As near as possible may be, do nothing that may occasion any breach between God and you, or raise any frowns in his face towards you: if you do not break with God, he will not break with you: all breaches as to peace and friendship between God and us, begin on our part; yea, neither will God break with us for little things, in case they be not

... saved by us, but watched and striven against; therefore, as near as possibly you can, do nothing to break and interrupt your peace with God for one moment. And because when you have done all, many things may and will fall out (we having sinful sinning hearts, and living in a world of snares and temptations) for which God may justly frown upon us. Let us,

Secondly, every day make even with him. In the close of every day let us consider wherein we have broken with God, come short of duty, given any grief and distaste to his holy spirit; and by faith and prayer let us sue out the pardon of it; and let us not lie down, if possible, without some intimation of his pardoning love. For which end,

X First, We should act faith on the blood and advocateship of Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for remission of sins, Rom. 3. 24, 25. And indeed Christ hath set up a standing Office in heaven, which we may call the pardon-office; he procureth new pardons for his people daily under their new sins;—We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, 1 John 2. 1, 2. Have daily recourse to the blood of Christ; truly without it there's no living; the best, the ho-

liest on earth have daily need of his blood, and should have daily recourse unto it, for the maintaining of their peace, and for the renewing of God's pardoning love in their souls.

Secondly, We should be humbly and earnestly importunate with God in prayer, resolving not to let him go without his blessing, carrying upon our spirits the sense of the worth, and also of our unworthiness of it. Thus the holy men of God, of old have done: they have used out the pardon of their sins by faith and prayer, and gotten a fresh sense of God's love when they have broken with him; as I might instance in *Job*, in *David*, and others.

We should every day pray, as that Father did, O Lord, saith he, do not, after the manner of a Judge, weigh or consider what I have done, what I have spoken, what I have thought; but blot out all my sins with thy own blood. And as another of them did; Lord, saith he, there is that in me which may offend thy holy eyes, I know and confess it: but who shall cleanse me? Or, to whom shall I fly for relief but to thee? O hide not thy face from me. Truly, when we have walked most watchfully, most circumspectly, many things may, and will fall out, that may offend the pure eyes of God's glory, which we should confess and bewail

before him, suing out the pardon of them by the blood of his Son.

Some of the saints have made this their daily practice, and so have maintained their peace for many years together; and when they have come to die, have gloriously triumphed over death; and have gone off the stage with much comfort; and so should we.

Fourthly, Would you indeed have all right? all in order in your souls for a dying hour? Then be true and faithful to your own consciences, that you may have them for you, and not against you, both while you live, and when you die. Conscience (my beloved) is Christ's deputy or viceroy in the soul; it is both a judge and a witness for God within us; it either accuses or excuses, acquits or condemns, Rom. 2. 15. And according as conscience is either for us, or against us; so we are either ready or not ready; prepared or not prepared for death and judgment: if we have the witness and judgment of our consciences for us, then have we boldness and comfort both in life and death; then we can welcome death's approach to us; but if the witness and judgment of conscience be against us, then death cannot but be terrible to us:—This is our rejoicing (saith the apostle) the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and Godly sincerity,

not in fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again: if our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God, 1 John 3. 21.

Oh my beloved, as a peace with God, so a sound and holy peace with a man's own conscience (that is to say, to have the witness and judgment of a man's own conscience for him and not against him) is highly requisite for a right disposing and preparing of us for a dying hour. As ever, therefore, you would have all ready and in order against such an hour, mind this, and look after this; be sure you carry it so to your own consciences, as that you may have them always for you, and not against you, when you come to die. In order to which, mind these two things.

First, Labour to get your consciences well enlightened and informed, and be much with God in prayer; in order thereto, beg and implore God for a true and faithful conscience, a conscience that will bear a true and faithful witness in your souls, and that will pass a right judgment upon things, both in your state and actions. In Heb. 10. 21. we read of a true heart or a true conscience, that is, a conscience rightly informed, a conscience that bears

a true and faithful witness, and that passeth a true and faithful judgment upon things: such a conscience should we beg of God, and labour by all means possible to attain unto.

Oh, my beloved, it is a dangerous thing to have an erroneous conscience, a mistaking conscience, a conscience not rightly informed: for pray mark, this is what leaves a man under a necessity of sinning, and so of grieving the spirit of God on the one hand, and it endangereth his peace and comfort on the other hand; for having an erroneous conscience, whether we obey it, or obey it not, we sin; if we obey it we sin, because conscience commands what is not agreeable to the word of God; if we obey it not, we sin, because we rebel against the light and dictates of conscience, omitting that which conscience tells us is a duty, though it be not a duty; or do that which conscience tells us is a sin, though it be not a sin; labour therefore to get your consciences well informed and enlightened.

Secondly, be sure you do nothing against the light and dictates of conscience, being rightly informed, but obey it in all things.

In Job 24. 13. we read of some that rebel against the light, that is, that do sin against their own consciences; which is a double sin, a sin cloathed with

great aggravations, and greatly discomposeth us for a dying hour: but we must take heed of this, and listen to the voice of conscience; conscience regulated by the word of God: God speaks to us by our consciences, he speaks to us through his word by our consciences, and he speaks to us through his providence by our consciences, and we should take heed of violating the dictates, or speaking of conscience in the least.

Doth not conscience many times tell us, such and such ways which we walk in are not good, and must be turned from, or we are undone for ever? And now we should be true and faithful to our own consciences, and speedily turn from those ways; we should have nothing to do with any thing that conscience condemns us in, or for.

Again, doth not conscience many times tell you, that such and such duties are totally neglected, or else seldom or slightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be conversant and diligent in the performance of? Now you should herein also be faithful and true to your own consciences; living up to the constant, diligent, and spiritual performance of those duties.

Again, doth not conscience many times tell you, that things are not right with you? That it is an evil frame of spirit you live in? That you are too carnal, too light, too vain, too frothy, too eager in your pursuits of this world, and too remiss in your pursuits of heaven and eternity?

Now as ever you would be ready for a dying hour, you should be faithful to your own conscience, setting that right which is amiss, and hastening out of that evil frame, into the contrary gracious frame.

O my beloved, if you be true and faithful to conscience, conscience will be true and faithful to you, witnessing for you, and not against you, both while you live, and when you die. In a word, in all things labour to keep a good conscience; this was Paul's great care and exercise, Acts 24. 16. Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men; O this will be a sweet and blessed exercise, and the more we are found in it while we live, the more comfort will it afford us when we come to die.

Fifthly, would you indeed have all things right and in order, in the matters of your souls when a dying hour comes? Then labour for much purity

of heart and life, and by no means admit of any sin, any corruption whatsoever; the more pure and holy we are, the more ready we are, and in the better posture things are with us for a dying hour: without holiness, saith the apostle, no man shall see God, Heb. 12. 14.

Holiness is necessary unto happiness; holiness is the way unto happiness; holiness is what fits and prepares us for happiness, and brings us unto happiness; yea, holiness is a part of our happiness; a great part of the happiness of heaven itself lies in holiness; accordingly the more holy we are, the more we are suited to, and prepared for the future happiness, and so for death and judgment: for that which prepares us for the future happiness, that also prepares us for death, which is but an inlet into that happiness for ever.

Therefore if you would have all things right, all things ready indeed for a dying hour, then labour for the exactest purity and holiness that possibly you can: this is that which the apostle aims at, and prays for on the behalf of the Thessalonians, as most conducing to the preparing of them for their latter end, 1 Thess. 3. 12, 13. And the Lord make you to abound and increase in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do

towards you, to the end we may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

The posture he would have them to be in at the coming of Christ, is the posture of unblameable holiness, which indeed is the best and readiest posture. The same things he prays for, in order to the same end, in 1 Thess. 5. 33. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God that your whole spirit, soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is that also which that other apostle enjoys in order hereunto, 2 Pet. 3. 14. Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace without spot, and blameless. The more spotless and blameless we are in our spirits and ways, the more ready we are for death and judgment. Oh, press after an eminency in holiness, admitting of none, no not the least taint or tincture of sin or sinful defilement upon any terms whatsoever!

Unholy souls are unready souls, they are unready for death, unready for judgment, unready for the future life: and for men to talk of being ready for these, and yet be unholy, is the greatest folly in the world: therefore labour for much purity and holiness.

First, Labour for much purity and holiness in your lives and walkings: this is what God indifferently calls for, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. As he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy.

We should press after universal holiness: there should be a vein and a tincture of holiness run through all we do, even our civil as well as our religious actions; we should as near as possible, be dedicated and devoted to God, and our lives should be lives of walking with him. They and they only, who walk with God while they live, are those who will be found ready to live with God when they come to die. As for all careless licentious ones, let them never talk of being ready for death and future life; for they are at an utter distance from any such thing. **Indeed ready they are, but for what? Ready for hell, ready for the wrath of God, ready for destruction: but they are not at all ready for a blessed eternity.**

The apostle weeps over such as being indeed thus ready, Phil. 3. 18, 19. Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies to the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly,

I remember a saying which I have read in one of the antients, (which I look upon to be a great saying) "Woe and alas! O Lord (saith he) how preposterous is it? How rash and unadvised? How inordinate? How remote from the rule of the word of thy truth and wisdom for a man to desire to see God with an unclean heart?" Oh, have a watchful eye upon your hearts: and labour to keep them as free from any taint and tincture of sin as possibly you can.

First, Be sure you suffer no lust to get up into the throne, where it is too often found. When sin is contented to by the will, the lust is on the throne in the heart; and indeed it is wonderful to think, how soon one or another corruption will mount up into the throne in the soul, if we let down our watch but a little: but oh, take heed of this; so far as any one lust whatsoever is predominant within us, so far we are marvelously unready for a dying hour. And not only so: but,

Secondly, Watch narrowly against the very first risings and motions of sin within; nip lust, if possible, in the very bud and blossom. It is true, this calls upon us to have a very curious eye upon our hearts; and indeed, such an eye we should have upon them, we must have upon them, if we mean to be christians indeed.

Grace will teach a man, not only to oppose the acts of sin, and to watch against the reign of any heart-lust; but also to oppose the very first motions and risings of sin in the soul. And the more you do this, the better posture you are in for a dying hour.



CHAP. XLIII.

UPON THE BLESSED STATE OF GOD'S SAINTS,
WITH MOTIVES AND ENCOURAGEMENTS UNTO
GODLINESS.

LORD,

TO close up these imperfect lines,—as I began with that beauty of holiness, which thou thyself art, and is essentially contained in thee, so my soul's desire is to end with that blessedness, which we thy saints enjoy, even in this vale of misery, and is eternally derived from thee; that so I may begin, and end with thee, who art the beginning and end of thy creature, that I may lead thy servants from the pure fountain of true holiness, to the sweet streams of inward happiness, wherein we may securely bathe our weary souls in rest and quietness, until thy gracious goodness shall conduct us home, unto the full fruition of those joyful rivers of thine endless pleasure.

I am no sooner entered upon this blessed search, but I find my soul ravished with admiration at the greatness, with apprehension of the goodness, with contemplation of the freeness of thy love and favor towards me. I see the great and glorious God of

heaven and earth, from all eternity, out of thine own gracious goodness, without all possibility in me (when I was not) either of desiring, or deserving this inestimable love of thine, electing me in Christ (of whom thou hadst no need, from whom thou couldst receive no benefit) unto holiness and happiness in this life, and unto blessedness in that to come; and as I find this love of thine to be purely, simply, and admirably, and eternally great, so it is also truly, necessarily, sufficiently and permanently good.

If it were not truly good, it could never make me truly happy; if not necessarily good, I might then enjoy happiness without it; if not sufficiently good, my happiness enjoyed by it, could not afford me satisfaction by it; if not permanently good, what I enjoy in satisfaction, I may want in perfection, by being suddenly removed from it.

But thou, O Lord, hast graciously afforded me all these degrees of happiness, that I might be truly and eternally happy, that I might be happy in thee, because there is no attaining happiness but by thee, that I may be happy in soul, and happy in body, happy in life, and happy in death, happy here, and happy hereafter.

Thou, O my blessed Saviour, art sweeter unto

me than all sweetness; thou art that blessed All-sufficiency, by which I am both fully, and for ever satisfied? thou art my safe repose, my inviolable peace, my rich rest, my safety in life, my comfort in death, my glory after death.

By thy patient sufferings, I am more than conqueror of sin, of sorrow, of death, of hell; by thy glorious resurrection I have assured hope of immortality; by thy blessed ascension of eternal glory; by the one thou hast powerfully defended me against the rage and malice of devils, by the other thou hast graciously exalted me in thy blessed union with me above the nature of angels; thy peace thou hast left with me, thy peace thou hast given unto me, even that blessed peace of conscience which the world cannot take from me, and that eternity of peace with thee in thy kingdom, which thou, Lord, in thy rich mercy hast prepared for me.

O that I might now lose myself with contemplation of thine endless love, that I might be ravished into extacy, with apprehension of my present safety of my future glory; that all my faculties of soul might be but one entire and pleasing sacrifice of thankfulness unto thee; that as thou (O my Saviour) and the Father are one, so I may be one with thee, to magnify thy gracious presence here, and

to be for ever where thou art hereafter, to see thy great glory, and enjoy mine own endless felicity.

From this for ever blessed fountain of eternal happiness do plentifully flow those pleasant streams of comforts to the souls and bodies of the saints, even in this life, by which they are securely quieted, and joyfully contented, even in the very worst of times, which either man's malice, or the devil's cruelty, can study to inflict upon them; if they receive injuries, they return prayers, they entertain them with a "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do, Luke 23. 24. and Lord lay not this sin to their charge, Acts 7. 60." And so while they lose outwardly, they gain inwardly, (and godliness is great gain) for by patience they possess their own souls.

Their courage is undaunted, for, the righteous is bold as a lion, able to encounter the fiercest affliction, ready to withstand the strongest temptation; if the world frown upon them, they can cheerfully say, and faithfully believe, that a small thing which the righteous hath, is better then great riches of the ungodly, Psal. 37. 16. if it smile, that they can account all things but loss and dung in compare of Christ Jesus; if outward blessings be present, they are humble under them, and thankful

for them; if absent, they can patiently tarry for the Lord, for they know he is their help, Pſal. 33. 14. and that no good thing will be withheld from them that love him, Pſal. 34. 1. if ſickneſs ſieze upon them, the Lord is about their bed, and about their path, and ſpieth out all their ways (their ways of ſin and their ways of ſorrow) yea, he maketh their beds in their ſickneſs, by eaſe to their bodies, comfort to their ſouls; if famine threaten them, they have God's promiſe to maintain them, for the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, and upon all thoſe that put their truſt in his mercy, to deliver their ſouls from death, and to feed them in their time of ſecurity, Pſal. 33. 17, 18. if ſudden danger approach them, they have heavenly ſuccour to defend them, for the angel of the Lord tarrieth about all them that fear him, to deliver them; yea even death itſelf is an advantage to them, and therefore no ways able to affright them, for precious in the ſight of the Lord is the death of his ſaints, and therefore, though the Lord kill them, yet will they truſt in him, Job 13. 15.

Lord, if thy mercy be thus great unto me, while I am yet in my ſinful fleſh, how unſpeakable ſhall I find thy love, when my body is become ſpiritual, my joy eternal?

From theſe outward enjoyments, may well be

derived their inward contentments, but by their inward refreshments is enjoined that incomparable, inconceivable, unutterable sweetness, that blessed peace of God, and joy in the holy Ghost, which passeth all our understanding, God's holy spirit witnessing with their spirits, that ~~they~~ are his children, and most precious in his sight, and they are now fully persuaded, with his blessed apostle, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor ~~principali-~~ties, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be ever able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. 8. 37, 38.

How full of solid comfort is this blessed assurance? how are our souls ravished with apprehension of the sweetness of our present comforts, of the fulness of our future joys? these blessed earnest of that ever blessed spirit, are the faithful pledges of his future embraces, far above the reach of malice to disturb, or devil to destroy; Hence it is that our faith is precious, our hope lively, our joy glorious, our lives safe, our deaths blessed, and from hence arise those many and those rich endowments of the saints, their zeal burning, their love wonderful, their desires earnest, their longings insatiate, their petitions for enjoyings importunate: Lord

what can I desire more of thee, than what I enjoy from thee? I have thy mercy without me, and thy mercy within me, thy mercy in life, and thy mercy in death, thy mercy from the beginning, thy mercy to the end, and thy mercy without end, I am even crowned and encompassed with mercy; O let me now say with holy *David*, I will always give thanks unto the Lord, and his praise shall be ever in my mouth, Psal. 34. 1. Let me not only praise thee myself but (with him also) invite others to praise thee, O praise the Lord with me (all ye his saints) and let us magnify his name together, Psal. 34. 3. O taste and see how gracious the Lord is, blessed is that man which putteth his trust in him. Be glad, O ye righteous, and rejoice in the Lord, and be joyful all ye that are true of heart, Psal. 32. 12.

And now, Lord, having had a taste of the sweetness of thy saints happiness on earth, I willingly forsake all to follow them; I have too long been straying in the strange pastures of impiety, and am now joyfully desirous to be led home to thy fold, that I may feed in the green and fresh pastures of thy sacred precepts, and drink freely of those waters of comfort in thy blessed promises, that I may so drink that I may never thirst, but be fully satisfied with thy grace in this life, with thy glory in that to come; O let this evil world neither allure

me to its vanities, nor betray me from thy mercies, but as thou hast overcome the world for me, so (by thy grace assisting) it may be also overcome by me; thou hast indeed told me, that I shall mourn in it, but my mourning shall be turned into joy, and that my joy shall no man take from me; Lord I believe, help my unbelief; I embrace thy cross, I despise the shame, for that glory which is set before me, of which I have a safe assurance by the blessed earnest of thy holy spirit in me: to thee, O Father, Son, and holy Spirit, one eternal, infinite, incomprehensible, and ever blessed Goodness, be all possible praise, honour and glory, now and for ever.—
 Amen.

O thou great God, who hast tender bowels of compassion, and multitudes of mercies for us miserable sinners, who are not easy to be provoked, but ever ready to forgive, who sufferest not thy whole displeasure to rise against us, but even in thy very judgments rememberest mercy, and art then moved with the sight of our misery, have mercy upon me a great and grievous sinner.

Lord, I have sinned, I have transgressed, I have done foolishly, in departing from thy judgments. But righteousness belongeth unto thee, (O Lord) and unto me shame and confusion of face; O let

thy bowels of compassion remove out of thy fight my multitudes of transgressions, that I may now appear before thee with a joyful heart, and happy soul.

Let thy words be sweeter to me than the honey and the honey-comb, (than the vain pleasures, and false prophets of this life) O let my chiefest joy be in thy service, my greatest delight to walk in thy ways, and all false ways (of pollution and uncleanness) let me utterly abhor.

Give me that inward peace, that quietness of conscience, which the world cannot take from me, that when I am afflicted by it, I may not be condemned with it.

Lord, let me faithfully believe; and graciously improve the constancy of thy love, in the worlds great unconstancy, the richness of thy mercy in this wretched ages misery.

O that my eye might drop without ceasing, that my heart might break forth into complaints, and my soul be melted into sorrows, for mine own and other sins, that have occasioned these heavy judgments, these sad complainings of thy people.

Lord, as I have been a great and grievous sinner

amongst them, so let me be a constant and a true mourner for them ; as thou hast beheld us sinning, so now also behold us sorrowing, that as our sins have provoked thee to anger, so our tears may move thee to compassion, that thy mercy may be magnified, our miseries relieved, our sorrows comforted.

O let not these bitter aggravations of thy judgments extort from us the least measure of impatience, nor beget in us the least degree of distrust ; let us neither complain of thy justice nor despair of thy mercy, but quietly and thankfully rely upon thee, and in thy blessed hour enjoy a sweet enlargement by thee.

Lord, pity the forlorn condition of thy sons and daughters in affliction, repair their outward losses by thine inward graces, that what is wanting to them of these earthly comforts, may be abundantly supplied in thy heavenly joys.

Forgive the great disturbers of the peace of this thy Sion ; Lord, open their eyes, that they may see how much they have erred from thy ways ; Lord, sanctify their hearts, that they may speedily return unto thee, and be for ever graciously accepted of thee, O that thou wouldst give us one heart, and one voice, that we might serve thee without

oning, that we may be all truly humbled before thee, and truly joyful in thee.

Restore me (for thy rich mercy sake) unto that blessed union of love, which is the band of peace; that as thou our God art one, so thy distressed church may be one, thy divided people one, their wishes and desires, their prayers and tears, their actions and endeavours one, for the glory, the churches safety, and the nations happiness, that we may have peace with thee our God, peace with our enemies, peace with our own souls, and everlasting peace with thee in thy kingdom. ~~we~~ AMEN.



PRAYER.

TO BE USED AT THE POINT OF DEATH BY THE
VISITORS OF THE SICK.

O Eternal, Almighty, most merciful, and for ever blessed Lord God of heaven and earth, we thy poor and most unworthy creatures, miserable and distressed sinners, in all humility of heart, and dejectedness of spirit, are here prostrate before thee: Lord, we confess, that we are utterly unworthy to approach thy glorious presence; blessed God we are confounded and ashamed to lift up our sinful eyes unto thee, whose gracious goodness we have so much neglected, whose patience and long-suffering so long abused, whose anger and indignation so justly provoked, whose wrath and fury so wretchedly deserved.

Lord, we are heavy laden with the burden of our sins, and thou alone art able to relive us, to thee therefore we address our sinful souls for mercy and forgiveness: O thou that art the blessed shepherd of our erring souls, that camest into the world to seek, and to save those that are lost, have mercy upon us: O thou that hast espoused us unto thyself, and hast given us thy love, have mercy upon us; O thou that callest us to come unto thee, and embracest us when we are come, receive our prayers. Lord, give us prepared hearts to meet thee in this holy duty; quicken our benumbed souls with holy fervency, that our devotions may ascend unto thy gracious presence: Lord, thou hast promised to be near unto all those which call upon thee with sincerity, and faithfulness of heart; for thy blessed promise sake, we most humbly beseech thee, let our humiliations be comfortable, our prayers acceptable.

In full assurance of the sweetness of thy mercy towards us, we are now bold to become petitioners unto thee for this thy sick servant, whose life is drawing near unto the grave.

Blessed Lord God, it is thou that killest and makest alive, that bringest down to hell, and raisest up again, we most meekly beseech thee therefore, for thy rich and tender love sake to thine elect, to mitigate that bitter curse which thou hast laid upon us all in *Adam*: Lord, look upon his affliction and his travel, and forgive him all his sins: give him sure patience to endure with meekness, whatsoever thou art pleased to inflict upon him; Lord, lay no more upon his body, than thou shalt make him able to bear; impose no more upon his wounded spirit than thou in mercy shalt support him under.

Forsake him not, O Lord our God, be not thou far from him; let him remember,

that this chastisement of thine, is common to thy dearest children; that thou hidest thy face from him but for a small moment, but with everlasting kindness thou wilt have mercy on him.

Lord, settle and compose his thoughts for thy kingdom; let no disturbance of this life distract those blessed meditations, which invite thee the weary soul to rest and quietness; let him now see, and joyfully believe, that thou wilt order all these outward things to thine own glory, and the good of those that have relation to him; let him freely forgive all injuries on earth, and heartily desire to meet his greatest enemies in heaven.

○ let his soul be now transported with the sweetness of thy love and favor towards him.

Lord, qualify this bitter portion, which thy holy providence hath allotted to him;

let him now remember, that the sufferings of this present life, are not worthy of that glory which shall be (suddenly) revealed in him; and when the outward man is drawing nearest to his dissolution, Lord Jesus strengthen, and rejoice the inward man with comfort and assured confidence of thy salvation.

To this end (O Lord) we most humbly beseech thee to illuminate his understanding, that he may see the sadness of his own condition in himself, that he may deny and utterly abhor himself, that he may disclaim all sinful confidence in his own actions and endeavours, and wholly cast himself upon the righteousness of him, in whom alone thy wrath is fully satisfied.

Lord, give him a serious and a true remorse of conscience for his many and his great offences; Lord Jesus grant that they may not now appear unto the terror and

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amazement of his sinful soul: O let him now remember that it is thy precious blood which purgeth him from all iniquity, that thou (O blessed Saviour) art become unto him righteousness, and holiness, and sanctification, and redemption.

Lord comfort and assist him in this last and greatest trial of his faith: and because the sensible decay of his infirm body, and the violent disturbance of his sickness, will not suffer him to call upon thee with digestedness of mind, and quietness of spirit; we therefore humbly pray thee, to sustain and comfort him, even in his greatest weakness and extremity.

Blessed God, let the sorrowful sighing of thy sick prisoner now come before thee: O let thy blessed spirit, which is in him, put up humble supplications to the Father for him: O satisfy him with thy mercy, and that soon: let those happy sighs and groans, which cannot be expressed, be-

come a pleasing sacrifice of thankfulness to thee, and a sweet savour of eternal rest to his departing soul.

O thou that art God of power, protect him from the fury of that roaring lion, who is now seeking to devour him: O thou that art the blessed Saviour of the sinful world, compassionate his frailties, commiserate his infirmities, forgive his iniquities; Lord, purge him by thy precious blood, cloath him with thine own righteousness, enrich him with thy blessed merits, and plead them to thy Father for him.

O thou holy and for ever blessed spirit, who art the pure fountain of eternal love, be present with him, relieve and comfort him in all these bitter pangs of his last hour, endue him with a willingness and cheerfulness to leave this transitory life, and crown him with eternity of joys in that to come.

And now, O Lord, we come unto thee for ourselves, who are here at this time upon our sinful knees before thee, Lord, open our eyes, that we may seriously consider of that last and solemn hour of our departure: Lord, sanctify our hearts, that while we are encompassed with sinful flesh, we may lament our often failings, and infirmities, and every day be more and more desirous to go home to thee, who art the God of spirits.

Lord give us grace, that we may walk soberly, and righteously, and holily, as becometh thy children; that at the resurrection of the just, our souls and bodies may enjoy the blessed consummatson of their endless happiness. Lord, hear our prayers, and let our cries come unto thee, for thy name's sake, for thy promise sake, for thy blessed Son's sake.—AMEN.

THE
DYING CONFESSION

OF A MINISTER OF GOD'S WORD, LALE OF WEST-
THOROCK, IN ESSEX.

THE Lord hath laid a gracious and a gentle visitation on me; I do acknowledge (with a thankful heart) that this weakness of body, this languishing of nature, these painful days and nights are from him: for misery cometh not out of the dust, neither doth affliction spring out of the earth, Job 5. 6. Ah (my friends) little do men think how much the great disturbances of sickness, how much the pains and infirmities of a decaying body, distract these blessed thoughts, those sweet and happy meditations, which the troubled soul desires; the spirit is willing, but the

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flesh is weak; Lord Jesus strengthen the inward man, and lay no more upon this sinful body than thou (in mercy) shalt enable it to bear.

I am now verily persuaded, that God hath purposed to determine my days, his blessed will be done, even so, Lord Jesus come quickly.

He that looketh into his life past, that ransacketh his soul, and calleth to mind the sinful failings of his youth, will find it very hard and difficult to make his calling and election sure: I have earnestly desired to leave no corner of my soul unsearched, and I find myself to be a very great and wretched sinner, I have committed grievous sins, very grievous sins, such sins as are not fit to be named before God's saints; I have examined my soul by each particular commandment, and I find myself guilty of the breach of all, and that in an high manner, especially considering

that weighty function God's providence hath called me unto: I have not only sinned against mine own soul, but against the souls of others too, when I have corrupted by my ill example, and that very often.

And now, when I look upon the glass of the law, and there see mine own vile-ness, I find God's justice, and mine own deserts, even ready to surprize and cast me down into the nethermost hell, and that most righteously.

But O see the goodness of a gracious God! I now come to lay hold upon the promises, but how? not without repentance, not presumingly; I apply them not in a general, but a particular way; I do not only believe that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, hut I believe also that he died for my sins, and rose again for justification.—God hath promised (and all his promises are yea and amen) that he will not forsake those which

trust in him, nay it hath bound himself unto it by an oath, by two immutable things which cannot fail, his truth and his holiness, Heb. 6. 18. and God hath said, that he which confesseth and forsaketh his sins shall find mercy, 1 John 1. 9.

Nay, I can go yet a little further, to strengthen my assurance, that my peace is made with God ; I every day and every hour, do pray unto my Saviour to intercede his Father for me ; and if I implore him, he will intercede his Father ; and if he intercede his Father, he cannot be denied.

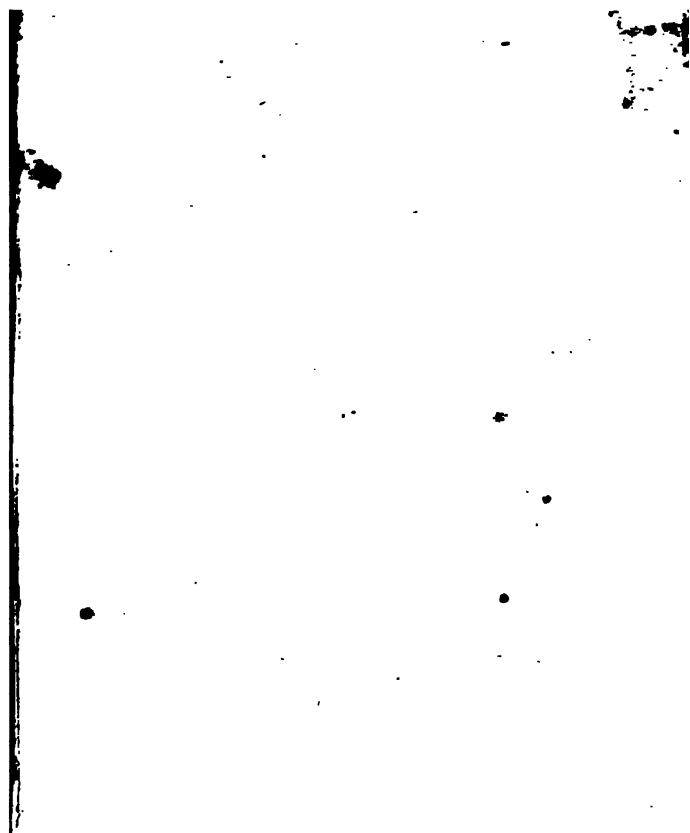
O my God, impute my sins to him, transfer his righteousness to me, and then I know I shall appear a glorious soul before thee.—AMEN.

FINIS.









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